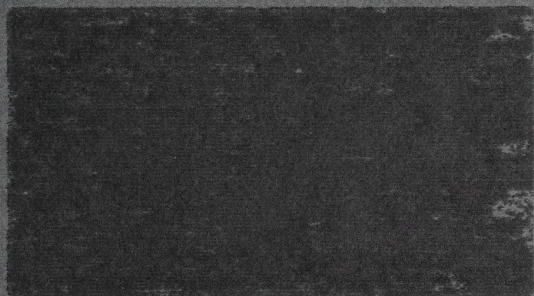


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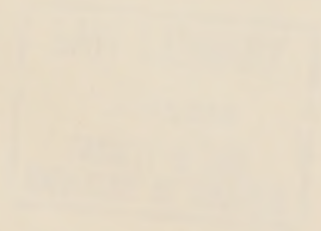



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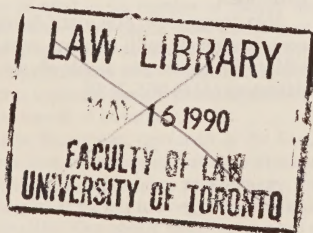
Second Session, 34th Parliament

**Official Report  
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Monday 5 March 1990

**Standing Committee on  
Social Development**

Food Banks



Speaker: Honourable Hugh A. Edighoffer  
Clerk of the House: Claude L. DesRosiers

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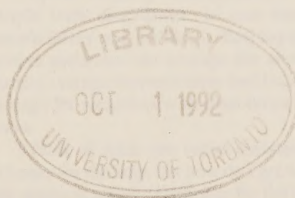
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(Hansard)**

Le lundi 5 mars 1990

**Comité permanent  
des affaires sociales**

Banques alimentaires



Président : L'honorable Hugh A. Edighoffer  
Greffier : Claude L. DesRosiers

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Monday 5 March 1990

The committee met at 1000 in room 151.

### FOOD BANKS

**The Chair:** Good morning. I would like to call to order this meeting of the standing committee on social development. This particular meeting has great timeliness since we are on the beginning day of End Hunger Week in this area and our mandate for this week, under standing order 123, is to consider the following subject matter presented by Richard Allen, "The phenomenon of expanding food banks in Ontario at a time of general prosperity and the urgency of discovering strategies for transferring back to government the responsibility for feeding the hungry which food banks took on as a short-term emergency measure early in this decade."

Mr Allen, under standing order 123, has requested that we devote 12 hours of this committee's time to this subject matter and that is what we are about to begin.

### MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

**The Chair:** We are very happy that Charles Beer, the Minister of Community and Social Services for the province of Ontario, is with us this morning and he is going to be our first presenter. Welcome, Mr Beer.

**Hon Mr Beer:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. It is a pleasure to join with you and the other members of the committee in discussing this particular topic. If I might, I have a statement that I would like to read and then answer any questions the members of the committee may have.

Thank you for this opportunity to discuss the challenge we face in combating poverty in Ontario. I am grateful to the committee for providing an opportunity for meaningful discussion on this issue.

One public measure of need is the number of people who require the help of food banks. Food banks were intended as a short-term stopgap, not a long-term solution. They represent dependence rather than independence. In this respect, they differ sharply from the long-term approach this government believes is essential to get at the root causes of poverty.

Our goal, as echoed in *Transitions*, the report of the Social Assistance Review Committee, is "to ensure that individuals are able to make the transition from dependence to autonomy, and from exclusion on the margins of society to integration within the mainstream of community life." Our ability to do that is a test of not only our province's compassion and fairness, but also our competence and foresight.

The strength and stability of our society is largely a measure of how well it offers those who have been left behind a chance to catch up. Our province's economic wellbeing and growth depends primarily on how well we develop the potential of our most important resources, people.

For these reasons, none of us can fail to be disturbed by recent signs that we are seeing the evolution of two economies. On the one hand there is growth in the advanced technology industries that provide healthy incomes and opportunities to those who are

well trained and adaptable. On the other hand technological change is also eliminating many traditional blue collar occupations, making more people dependent on low-skill, low-pay jobs that offer few immediate benefits and even fewer long-term prospects.

It is essential that we cut a path through that dead end. We have to ensure that the people of this province have the opportunity to share in the benefits of the technological revolution.

The people lining up for a bag of groceries at food banks are not just a lingering reminder of economic problems we faced a decade ago. They are an early warning of economic and social problems we are facing and stand to face a decade from now.

When we look at the facts surrounding poverty, we see reasons to be alarmed, but we also see reasons to believe that we can make tremendous progress.

First, let's consider some of the disturbing facts. Across Canada, we face the prospect of a widening gap between those who are well off and those who are left out. We are seeing changes in society that threaten to intensify the problems. For example, between 1971 and 1986 the divorce rate in Canada increased by almost 300 per cent. That is especially important when you consider that more than half of all families in which mothers are raising children on their own live in poverty. Too many children—the people we depend on to run our society and our economy in the future—are not being given a fair start.

Children in the most economically disadvantaged families are more than twice as likely to fall behind in school and less than half as likely to finish school. This is a tragedy for the children themselves and a potential crisis for all of us. As an ageing society with a growing need for skilled people, the dropout rate is a looming cloud.

I mentioned a moment ago that there are also positive trends. People have demonstrated that when they are given the opportunity to escape poverty and dependence, they grasp it. At one time, many believed that people who received social assistance did so because they did not want to work. The common myth was that once someone started collecting benefits, he never stopped. These myths have been proven wrong.

The vast majority of recipients are sole support families and people with disabilities. In fact more than 40 per cent of beneficiaries are children. Employable working-age adults receive assistance on average for about seven months. Single parents average between three and four years on the system. The average for recipients with disabilities is slightly more than five years.

I think of what one social assistance recipient told SARC, "Thanks for the help, but how do I get off this thing?" Answering that question was the challenge for the Social Assistance Review Committee, and is the challenge for this government and will be society's challenge for the 1990s and beyond.

Times have changed since the days when most women stayed home. The large majority of families had two parents and unemployment rates were consistently low. Times have changed and our approach to social assistance has changed, too.

We must provide meaningful support to help people rise above poverty and to stay above it. We must create opportunities for people who need to break into a job and for people who need



to break out of a dead end job. We must provide training for those who need a skill and retraining for those whose skills have become obsolete.

Providing the opportunity for people to lead independent lives requires a network of services that span all of these needs, including programs to promote education, access to good housing, advanced job training and community-based services.

On 18 May 1989 a \$415-million commitment by this government ensured that Ontario's social service system would be an integral part of the opportunity network. My ministry's strategy, as reflected in the May reform package, is to assist people towards economic independence so they can move into the mainstream of society, support themselves and get off social assistance programs.

We have taken significant steps to ensure that the benefits people do receive are adequate for their needs and that our social assistance system is fair to all and simple to understand. Our goals were developed with the help of those who are most familiar with the problems, including the people who receive social assistance themselves.

I would note as well that many of the elements included in the reform package are also the priorities of those who use food banks, judging by a report prepared a few months ago by the Daily Bread Food Bank. Their findings echo our conclusions and, I am proud to say, our actions.

We have made it possible for social assistance recipients to work without immediately losing health benefits and subsidized housing. We are helping people in low-paying jobs, especially those with families. We have put in place simpler and fairer procedures. We are providing support and guidance to get off social assistance, and we are providing larger direct benefits for children.

I would like to spend a few minutes discussing what these changes mean to individuals and families counting on our support. A cornerstone of our reforms is the opportunity to work without losing essential housing and health benefits. This is being addressed through the supports to employment program or STEP. My ministry unveiled STEP last May and implemented it last fall.

## 1010

Social assistance recipients who seek employment are now able to retain health benefits until they achieve an income that will enable them to cover these benefits themselves. Health benefits are no longer withdrawn from those who miss the eligibility test by a small margin. We have created a buffer zone for people to help ensure they are always better off working.

As of January, shelter costs for those in greatest need are covered 100 per cent up to a new higher social assistance ceiling. This is especially important in dealing with the need for food banks inasmuch as high housing costs have forced many to rely on this service to help make ends meet.

Let's look at the challenge of helping those who work in low-paying jobs.

Under the STEP reforms, people can continue to receive needed assistance even if they have a full-time job. Out-of-pocket expenses for child care are taken into account in calculating the recipient's cheque. Other basic working expenses are also compensated. Beyond the basic exemption and child care expenses, recipients retain 20 per cent of net earnings rather than lose a dollar for every dollar they earn.

These measures are helping those on social assistance help themselves. Consider a single parent with two children under the age of 10. Assuming rent of \$600 and child care costs of \$500 per month, under the old rules she and her children would be better

off if she stayed out of the workforce. Under the new STEP program, if she gets a job at \$8 per hour, their finances will improve by \$277 a month.

A third area in which people tell us they need help is upgrading skills to get a job.

Programs announced in last spring's Ontario budget provide \$54 million for job training and work placement and a further \$8 million through the Ministry of Skills Development for literacy training. Recipients who enter skills training programs are able to keep more of their training income than they had previously.

We are already seeing positive results through these changes and through the STEP program. Although the reforms have been in place for only a short time, there is already evidence that they are helping people to do what they want to do: get jobs that will allow them to make their own way.

Compare the family benefits case loads of last September with those this past January. With the impact of the STEP reforms over these past four months, there was a significant increase in recipients with earnings, from 21,200 to 27,400. That is almost 30 per cent more people working. The average monthly gross earnings increased from \$320 to \$425, a 33 per cent jump.

The bottom line is that more people receiving social assistance than ever before have more money for food, shelter, clothing and other necessities. These early but very positive results bear out the fact that people on social assistance would prefer to be working.

Another reform called for by those on social assistance is simpler and fairer procedures.

We have begun by eliminating some immediate, obvious inequalities. Men aged 60 to 64 are now eligible for family benefits on the same basis as women. Family benefits allowances for people over 65 who do not qualify for old age security are now equal to those aged 60 to 64.

Farm income is now being treated the same as small business income in applications for social assistance.

We are also moving ahead on some other administrative reforms to improve the system, including a pilot program under which benefits will be deposited directly into the recipient's bank account on a voluntary basis.

We are working now to clarify the eligibility for benefits of working recipients with earnings below the cutoff point. There are differing interpretations among various municipalities as to whether such recipients are still eligible for benefits. We have initiated a review of the situation. We wish to make it clear that in all parts of the province recipients with incomes below the cutoff point are to receive benefits, even if they have found suitable work.

The fifth recommended area of improvement is more direct benefits for children. The reforms we are making reflect that commitment. Consider the new provision that will cover the full cost of rent for most recipients. Under the old system, recipients often had no choice but to pay their rent with money they needed to feed and clothe their children. Now we are helping many parents to avoid that dark dilemma.

Beginning last October, we made available \$54 million to increase benefits for recipient families with children.

Let's put these measures into perspective. Consider a single parent family with three young children paying rent of \$650 per month. That family received \$262 more this past January than it did in January 1989.

When you look at what we are doing to reform the social assistance system in this province, it is clear we are moving in the right direction, but we have a lot farther to go.



First, we need new social assistance legislation. We have gone virtually as far as we can in reforming the social service system under the current law.

The Family Benefits Act and the General Welfare Assistance Act were passed almost a quarter of a century ago. Since that time the world has changed in many ways, but the legislation has not kept pace. It has been modified on a piecemeal basis. For example, there are 22 categories of eligibility offering different benefit levels, too many of which bear little relationship to people's actual needs or the cost of meeting them.

My ministry will introduce new legislation to ensure fairness and replace complexity with clarity.

We expect to have all of the groundwork completed to bring a bill forward following extensive consultation. Many will be disappointed that the pace of legislative reform is not faster. However, we are dealing with a complex set of questions. More than 200 issues have been identified. It is important that we get this legislation right.

It is also important that we act on the basis of consultation. We are not closing the door on participation in improving our social service system. We are keeping it wide open.

For that reason, we are putting together an advisory group on new social assistance legislation. The advisory group, made up of a cross-section of the community, including recipients, will help us to judge the effectiveness of the new programs we have put in place and propose ways of improving them.

This leads me to our second major priority, building partnerships with groups that can provide support to people seeking to build an independent lifestyle.

We are building a new partnership within the government. We are beginning to work more closely with the Ministry of Education to help get children from dependent families off to a solid start. We are working with the Ministry of Health to promote independent living in the community for people needing long-term care. We are also working with the Ministry of Skills Development, the Ministry of Colleges and Universities and the Ministry of Labour to provide people with the tools they need to build an independent life.

We are building a new partnership with business and labour, including programs to promote job training, counselling and literacy enhancement to help people break the chain of dependency.

We are building a new partnership with municipalities. One of the efforts we are making in this regard is the provincial-municipal social service review. We have to clear up the division of responsibilities between the province and the municipalities. I expect to receive the report of the provincial-municipal review soon and I intend to follow up on it promptly.

The final area I would like to discuss is the need to build a new partnership with the federal government. There is an obvious need for national reform.

Several of the measures we are trying to pursue to reform social assistance require the co-operation of the federal government, including a new federal-provincial program targeted specifically to children and a new approach to income security. But Ottawa seems determined to go in the very opposite direction. The federal budget's five per cent cap on the growth of Canada assistance plan funding for Ontario will take away at least \$160 million of social service funding in the first year alone.

This is the first constraint that a federal government has ever placed on the Canada assistance plan. It could hardly have come at a worse time. The Minister of Finance himself has forecast higher inflation, particularly after the goods and services tax is

implemented, and an 8.5 per cent national unemployment rate next year.

It makes no sense at all for the federal government to target a program of last resort as a cost-saving venture. This is not only a breach of faith; we believe it is a breach of the law. That is why the province is supporting British Columbia in its court challenge over this issue. It is our firm view that Ottawa does not have the legal right to break a contract with the provinces, a contract to help support people in need. It is time that the government of Canada got back into the business of fighting poverty.

We have come a long way. We have reduced some of the barriers people face in the struggle to move from dependence to independence, but we still have a long way to go. The government of Ontario is committed to continuing the progress. We are determined to replace poverty with opportunity and dependence with self-reliance. We will ensure that all of the people of Ontario can achieve our potential together.

**The Chair:** Mr Beer has suggested he is now ready for questions. Mr Allen, please.

**Mr Allen:** I want first to say how impressed I am with the numbers of groups that are coming forward to make presentations to us in the course of the next couple of days on this question of food banks, of the crisis of hunger in Ontario, of the insufficiency of minimum wage and social assistance supports to keep people out of the desperate straits, by ending their days and weeks and sometimes months of begging for food.

1020

If I could by way of preface to a question to the minister, who I am pleased to see here, I would like to acknowledge that there have been indeed some useful developments over the past year under his and Mr Sweeney's stewardship that we can all be happy about. I am not interested in playing games around those developments.

What I do want us to understand, however, is that the \$415 million that the minister refers to includes a very substantial sum for simple inflation catch-up this January around social assistance rates, that the actual dollars spent on the first full fiscal year in which the Social Assistance Review Committee report was applied are in reality only about \$80 million and that the first full year, next year, which will see the ministry's reforms come into place, will represent closer to \$270 million to \$275 million as against \$415 million for a full-year implementation of the first year of SARC reforms. So there is, at this point in time, I think regrettably, a deficit in government response even if there is a balance in the budget.

I guess my first question to the minister is, when does he foresee, what timetable does he have for implementing the full increases of the first two years in social assistance supports, reforms that were recommended by SARC? You will recall that you laid some emphasis upon those in family situations so that children would get the benefit first, and I thought that was appropriate, but it did leave out single persons and the disabled and so on on general welfare and on other benefit programs, so we have some gap to make up for the first stage of reforms. Then the second, of course, I think should normally come within this coming year. Are you planning to reach the levels of social assistance recommended by the SARC reforms, plus inflation add-ons in this coming fiscal year?

**Hon Mr Beer:** I think that in terms of the commitment that we have made with the program, clearly when Mr Sweeney spoke last May, while we had changed some of the emphasis in terms of some of the programs, we very much look on the social



assistance report, the Thomson report, as a guideline in terms of the actions that we take. I think that does not necessarily mean that we will do everything exactly in the order that they did, and in fact we had jumped around a bit in doing some of the implementation and recognized that through that, some groups were still left out.

I think as we go forward—and clearly we intend to continue and we want to try to deal with those groups that were not completely covered and really each year to make these reforms critically important and to demonstrate the changes happening—we see that each year we have to keep moving on with this program. To simply make a change in one year and then wait for another five or six before anything happens would negate, in fact, the impact of what has happened.

So we are going to continue to deal specifically with the different issues that were raised by the review. I cannot give you specifically in what order or the amounts at this time except to say that I think if you look at what we have done over the last five years, that commitment stands firm in that we have increased over the last five years, I think it is something in the order of 20 to 22 per cent in real dollars that have gone into the social assistance field, and we are going to continue that.

I say that against the backdrop of the federal cuts, which certainly do not make it any easier in terms of trying to find the \$160 million or so that we estimate we are going to lose. We have underlined, and I want to underline again this morning, our commitment to continue with those reforms, but we would ask everyone to ask the federal government when it is going to get back to the table to help us, because as you know, many of the major reforms in the later stages of the Social Assistance Review Committee will require, very clearly, federal participation.

**Mr Allen:** Could I just ask the minister a further question. A number of things I understand; changes in legislation take some time, and obviously all want to get it right. But at the same time, we are in fact in Ontario—and this is, I think, the concern of these hearings—in a set of circumstances where social assistance rates do not recognize full shelter costs. You move to 100 per cent of the ceiling, but the ceiling is not full shelter cost.

The market basket approach to basic necessities is not in place. As a result, those providing emergency food services tell us that 50 per cent to 60 per cent, at least, of the people who are on them, at least in my community, are people who would not be there if they just simply had those two essential requirements met. Then one could begin to deal with people who are falling through other cracks in the system in a more systematic way.

You keep sort of inching forward step by step on a problem, but when are you going to tackle the central problem that the food bank people have to deal with, namely, the fact that social assistance and minimum wage legislation does not allow people to actually buy what they need in terms of shelter and basic necessities in the marketplace? When are you going to cope with that problem? That is the essence of the problem that these people want to know your response to.

**Hon Mr Beer:** With respect to the social assistance side, I think it is very clear that we go back to what happened to seniors in the early 1970s. We made the great quantum jump of helping seniors get out of poverty when we raised the old age security, or when the federal government did. Clearly, and I think this is a central part of the reforms that we brought in, we recognized that we have to put money into the pockets of the social assistance recipients. In particular, we have targeted the single parents.

It seems to me that the kinds of changes we have made in basic shelter and basic needs and the change in terms of the

children's benefit in October, and continuing to do that, become very critical, because that puts much more money into the pockets of individuals. That money hopefully will then require less and less dependence on other kinds of support. I think we see it as being very important that on a yearly basis we continue to address that specific need. That is why the legislation becomes so important.

You mention the market basket approach, and that raises really the question of adequacy. I know that when I came in as minister, one of the questions I had was, where do these rates come from? Why is it that it is determined that this is the amount of money that a single mother with so many children with receive? It is purely historical. There is no particular reason why it is there. It is just at a point, plus inflation.

Among some of the critical principles we have to deal with and change in the legislation, I believe, is adequacy. We are going to have to come up with some clearer and specific sense of what that is. I want to look very directly at the market basket issue. The advisory committee that I will be putting together very shortly which will bring together people not unlike those who were involved in the Social Assistance Review Committee, the Thomson exercise, is going to look at that. I want them to come up with recommendations that they may have.

I appreciate that that is not for tomorrow morning and that means that we still have, in the interim, questions around adequacy. The Ontario Social Development Council did some studies and in its report felt that the changes to the basic shelter had been very, very significant. They still feel that around the basic needs there is more room to go, and I am not saying that they say both of those are perfect, but I think they were looking at those in terms of the various costs out there.

I think the challenge for us as a government is to continue, on an annual basis, to get that legislation in as effectively and as soon as we can, within it, having a much better and clearer sense around adequacy, around funding, around discretionary funding, all those issues. But the bottom line—and I think we would agree on this—is, to the extent that we can find that adequate level, then that will lessen our need for food banks, if at all.

## 1030

**The Chair:** Mr Beer, your half-hour is over. We have requests from two other members of the committee for questions. I really have made the decision not to grant those requests simply because we are on such a tight schedule and this is our first attempt at this very confined 12-hour period for one subject matter.

I would ask that the two members of the committee bear with me in that decision. I hope then that you will be the first questioners when we have our witnesses come before us. I am trying to be fair. I hope you will accept that, but I do feel that we have this down to 5-, 10-, 15-minute intervals and I have to keep within that time frame.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** The only difficulty with it is that it allows the minister to come in and have a half-hour platform, give two long-winded answers and basically use up time which we could have more valuably spent with the groups.

**The Chair:** These time frames were determined by the sub-committee. It was a unanimous decision. Personally, I was very surprised that the minister was granted only a half-hour, but that is what was decided.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** It was the use of the half-hour that bothers me.



**Mr Allen:** We had hoped originally that the minister would come after all the presentations and that he would have an hour on Thursday morning.

**The Chair:** It is a very difficult decision for me to make. Mr Beer, do you want to accommodate one question from the third party or do you want to go along with this?

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** I am just going along with the Chair.

**The Chair:** Okay. I guess I am not used to that. I have not been in the chair since December. I will have to get used to the mannerisms.

Thank you very much, Mr Beer. I am sure that you will be available for any one of the members if he wants to discuss this further. I know you did have difficulty with Thursday, which was when we had originally requested that you be with us.

**Hon Mr Beer:** I sense that after 19 March there may be a number of questions. I would want to underline again that the approach of our ministry is that these hearings are very important. We are also very interested in what the different groups are saying and what the recommendations of the committee will be.

**The Chair:** I too am very happy with the interest this subject has engendered and with the number of you who are here today. I ask Ms Sue Cox from the Daily Bread Food Bank, who will be presenting the introduction, to come forward.

As you likely can see from our agenda, today's hearings are mainly from groups in the Toronto area. Oakville, I am sure, would not mind being called part of the Toronto area for today at least.

**Ms Cox:** Thank you very much for listening to what we have to say. I think I will be able to gain you the two minutes lost right now because I am just going to place in context for you what is going to happen this morning and throughout the rest of the day.

During the morning we are going to be hearing basically from programs, as you say, in Toronto, the two major regional food banks in Toronto, and another program promoting advocacy around food issues. Following them, we are going to be hearing from the people who are, I suppose, the real experts on food banks, those folks, volunteers and staff, who every day face people who are out of food and out of money to buy food for themselves and their families.

This afternoon, we will be getting a more province-wide perspective when we have the original food banks from around the province coming in. Just immediately, the first program we are going to be hearing from is the North York Harvest Food Bank. We will be hearing from their executive director, Loren Freid. That is a problem that particularly targets suburban hunger, something that we often do not think about. They are serving about 9,000 people a month. Second, we will be hearing from Richard Yampolsky of FoodShare Metro Toronto. Their main focus is on advocacy, education and community development around food issues. Third, we will be hearing from Gerard Kennedy of Daily Bread Food Bank. Daily Bread is serving about 84,000 people every month, both in the inner city and in some suburban areas.

#### NORTH YORK HARVEST FOOD BANK

**The Chair:** Mr Freid from North York. You will be granted the 20-minute interval. Hopefully we will have time for more questions. If you could accommodate us with about a 10-minute presentation, that would be very helpful.

**Mr Allen:** Madam Chair, could we just observe that anyone who has written briefs and would like copies made for the committee should submit them to the clerk and the clerk will arrange that.

**Mr Freid:** Good morning. Each food bank administrator is caught in an agonizing and simultaneous contradiction. Simply stated it is this: Food banks want to close but cannot abandon those in need. Let me show you how this has become a crisis of conscience for us through my own organization.

When we started operations in January 1986, agencies with existing food programs were progressively helping more people each month and, at the same time, turning away more people each month because of a lack of food resources. No one outside this particular food network at that time knew that the network existed, and certainly the people within the network did not understand the broad scope of the situation that they were confronting at that time, not even the local politicians.

When we were doing door-knocking, establishing the North York Harvest Food Bank at that time, we were contacting some local politicians and asking them, "Do you know that there is this problem in your constituency?" We would point out the particular agencies which were located in their constituency. They said: "No. We didn't know. We don't get phone calls."

In 1986, hunger was pretty much a nonissue. When we started in 1986, we started with one small warehouse, no regular staff, no transportation or trucking. Since then, we have doubled our size; we employ a staff of 2.5 people. We have 50 volunteers who come in on a regular basis to perform a variety of duties, and we have distributed close to two million pounds of food in that time, to over 35 suburban-based food programs that help feed approximately 9,000 people a month.

Here is my crisis of conscience. On the one hand, we have expanded to meet this growing need, and I am proud of this. Not only have we been able to meet this growing need, we have been able to gather statistics to report on exactly what kind of hunger exists in the suburbs of Toronto. On the other hand, my organization is growing year by year, and as time goes by, we have become a more in-grained dimension into hunger relief, and this was certainly something that we did not intend to be.

Our organization is growing, not because we are perpetuating a hunger problem, as some may have suggested, but rather because the hunger problem was there in the first place and we have been forced to confront it. In fact, no other charitable organization addresses hunger in a more direct manner than a food bank. We distribute the food, our agencies are in daily contact with clients and we keep hunger statistics which we publicize.

Why are we growing? We are growing because we are forced to prop up a defective welfare system and a government that has become morally bankrupt. Why is this government morally bankrupt? Because it places the balancing of a budget as a greater, more essential investment on the province's future than ensuring that all of its children are adequately fed. Believe me, in the suburbs of Toronto, over half of the people who receive emergency food assistance are children and it has been this way for the past couple of years, and we have reported it that way for the last couple of years. Also, because the government accepts and even encourages this notion of a private welfare system and even accepts us as an extension of that welfare system—that is why this system is defective.

I can give you an example of that. I have a letter here, in fact, dated March 1988, two years ago, from the Premier of Ontario, David Peterson, and there is a portion of it which reads like this: "I would like to commend you and your fellow board members on the success that you have achieved in just over a two-year

period. Your organization provides an excellent example of the complementary roles which government and the voluntary sector can play in meeting community needs."

1040

My response to this is, what does the government define as community needs? If the government defines community needs as the responsibility of the voluntary sector to provide the basic necessities of life, of which food is the most basic of all, then this letter is a travesty of social justice and the thinking behind this letter is a travesty of social justice. In no way should the voluntary sector be considered a central area for providing the basic necessities of life. If there is one thing that government is responsible for, it is to provide the basic necessities of life.

Moreover, you cannot keep taking us for granted, as this letter presupposes, for two reasons. One, although we face this crisis of conscience, of wanting to close but forcing to stay open, we will continue doing more than just simply collecting and distributing food. We will continue fighting for social change; we will continue to educate the public with our accumulating statistics; we will advocate for necessary changes. More important, as to why you cannot keep taking us for granted, the voluntary sector is tired, fed up and stressed out.

These hundreds of individuals providing thousands of hours of volunteer time are there addressing the day-to-day demand of providing food to families under increasingly shrinking resources and increasingly pressurized circumstances. This is coupled with the realization that, "Hey, this is no longer some short-term service but rather a full-blown crisis."

The voluntary sector are not professionals for the most part, they are not social workers and most of them are not paid. You cannot keep expecting this kind of service, this privatized welfare system to continue. The system may break down.

In conclusion, I would just like to say that I feel that now is the time for change. There are no excuses. We have all the forces working at the same time, right now. We have a blueprint for change, which is the Social Assistance Review Committee report. We presumably have government commitment to initiate it, or so they have said. We have overwhelming community and business support. Four, and perhaps most important, we have an affluent economy from which to do it in.

If we do not do it now, the longer we wait, the more difficult it will be to get out of this business and the more difficult it will be to expect and assume that the voluntary sector will continue with this work. It is finally time to put social justice ahead of balancing budgets and donations to charity.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr Freid. Questions, please? Mr Jackson, did you want to begin since you were not able to place your question the last time?

**Mr Jackson:** Yes, I could. Loren, thank you for your very direct brief. It has helped to put a few more things in perspective. In your final point, on forecast overview, you make reference to the stoppage of the provincial emergency shelter assistance program funding to local. Could you expand upon that and the impact that it has had or is going to have?

**Mr Freid:** In our discussion with our recipient programs, many of which receive some form of ESAP funding over the past few years, there is a feeling that although it is a good idea to eventually cut back on ESAP funding, now would not be the time to do it. While we are in the midst of implementing various parts of the SARC reform, we have to allow for a transition period to step in.

By cutting back ESAP payments now, the situation is that we anticipate seeing the same number of people coming to emergency food programs and at the same time less programs out there operating because they do not have the ESAP funding to help them cover expenses.

**Mr Jackson:** I very much appreciate point 3 which talks about the shortage of affordable housing and its impact on food banks, that they become, by extension, a form of shelter subsidy because with the eviction notices the way they are that becomes a rather clear indication to you that your housing needs can be changed on you regardless of your needs.

I wanted to suggest to you that perhaps it may be time for us to look at more of a shelter subsidy approach to rent control as opposed to the system we have now which is universal. I personally do not support the universal nature of rent control and support a shelter subsidy concept. That is why our caucus was able to support and embrace SARC so quickly, because it had that principle in it.

To what extent have you been able to get feedback from the former minister, who is now the Minister of Housing and what, if any, are the discussions that you have heard of in this sensitive area? It strikes me that we have a minister who has had exposure to the importance of SARC, the needs of social assistance in this province and the housing crisis.

Rent control is not working and if I had had an opportunity, Madam Chairman, to ask some questions of the current minister it would have been in this area, to determine the growing number of people who he is now supporting because rents are going up at 15, 18 and 20 per cent, especially in the Toronto area, and not at 6 per cent, which they suggest is more close to the guideline.

**Mr Freid:** We would like to see some kind of legislative rental cap to offset any notions that a landlord may have to raise the rent upon hearing that rental subsidies have increased, because otherwise it is a means with no ends. So if we were able to make one recommendation forward, that would be to put some kind of legislative rental cap on rentals.

**The Chair:** Mr Johnston, you missed it the last time as well.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** I was afraid, coming to these hearings, it would be like some sort of depressing déjà vu. I mean, before your group was in existence I was making these arguments that you are making today, and it is sad to see this, many years later, is still going through the same business and having the Premier's own letter confirm that the government now sees you as an adjunct to its policies.

What meetings have you had with this minister about his presumptions about your role? It sounded a little bit like he sees you disappearing at some point or other, but he did not indicate anything in terms of target times or anything like that. Have you had successful meetings with this minister around this issue?

**Mr Freid:** That is something my colleagues could delineate a little bit more specifically than I could. My colleagues have met with the minister more often than I have.

**The Chair:** Mr Freid, do you want to tell us which colleagues so that Mr Johnston can place this question at the right time today?

**Mr Freid:** Yes, certainly. I know Rick Myer, Richard Yampolsky and Gerard Kennedy can.

**The Chair:** Okay, then we will revisit that question. Mr McGuinty, do you have a question at the moment?

**Mr McGuinty:** Yes. You are undoubtedly familiar with the SARC report. You are familiar with the kinds of assistance being



provided currently through our agencies. Do you think that there are limitations to what government can do in this area?

**Mr Freid:** Again, not during this kind of circumstance that we are in. I do not believe there is any kind of limitation that can be imposed on feeding your children. If you do not do it now, the government has to realize that you are only going to be imposing greater expenses on the state in the future; expenses in legal systems, in health and education.

**Mr McGuinty:** Yes, I realize, certainly, your argument is well made with regard to the cost-benefit analysis which would show that to help people break this cycle is not only for reasons humane, but for economic reasons. Do you think the crisis that you allude to in the Metro area is typical of what exists elsewhere in the province?

1050

**Mr Freid:** That would be something that will be brought up by other people representing their own areas. I can only speak for my own area, which is quite unique I think, because it does represent an area of Metropolitan Toronto that was deemed too affluent to have any sort of needy people. In fact, that is the great perspective that we are working from. We are not only trying to raise food, but it is so important in the area of our service that we also raise awareness that in fact hunger is a problem that exceeds the areas north of Eglinton Avenue.

**Mr McGuinty:** As you might know, we are in effect, two or three days a week, social workers at our constituency offices. I live in Ottawa and I am associated with the food banks operative in Ottawa. I have close friends and personal family working with them constantly and I am not sure if the kind of crisis situation to which you allude is typical of my own area. But we will have people hopefully from Ottawa somewhere along the line.

In concluding, I would respectfully suggest that your reference to the government, notwithstanding what it has done and proposes to do, as morally bankrupt does a disservice to your good cause. I would suggest it is a statement unwarranted and unworthy and detracts from the otherwise compelling and convincing statement of need which you have reflected, sir. Thank you.

**Mr Allen:** Mr McGuinty may not want to face moral reality, but the evidence that was given was abundantly clear.

**Mr McGuinty:** What the hell is moral reality?

**Mr Allen:** Could I ask you how you respond to the apparent contradiction? On the one hand, the minister tells us that income levels for the people you are talking about are going up, case loads are going down, yet at the same time food bank patronage keeps on increasing. Is there something wrong with his statistics when he compares September with January, for example, or is this simply an indication that there is a whole sector of need out there that the government really is out of touch with?

**Mr Freid:** He claims to be reading reports submitted by the Daily Bread Food Bank and other similar organizations, which tell a very hands-on situation of events. I can only go by those statistics. Perhaps he is interpreting something in there which we do not see.

**Mr Allen:** Do you foresee, if the government does not act, a further degree of institutionalization of emergency food services in the sense that food banks get hitched up with surplus foods in the mainline food delivery systems, retailers, wholesalers and so on, so that we end up with a population that is dependent of food

surpluses, a whole sector of dependency that, from my point of view, is morally highly questionable?

**Mr Freid:** You have just mentioned the big-I word, institutionalization, something that I was very careful not to mention, but something that we are very concerned about. Absolutely, you are going to have a growth industry of people being employed to service the poor and just to service the poor. Certainly, as I mentioned, with the volunteer sector and the demands placed on it to keep this network going, you are eventually going to have to have more people hired to take on these jobs. This in turn will lead to further institutionalization of the system, something which we are desperately trying not to have. It will only lead to that circumstance you have just mentioned.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr Freid, for being as concise as possible with your answers.

## FOODSHARE METRO TORONTO

**The Chair:** I would like to call forward Richard Yampolsky from FoodShare. Mr Yampolsky, you have 20 minutes as well.

Just for those who are watching and are going to read our minutes, I understand that these time periods were established as a result of a discussion that the Toronto area would be granted two hours of hearings. They were divided somewhat among yourselves and somewhat with some consultation with members of the Legislature. I want people to realize that we have tried to do it in as fair a way as possible, and they are not just imposed time limits. Yours, as I understand it, is 20 minutes.

**Mr Yampolsky:** Madam Chair and members of the committee, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to address you today. My name is Richard Yampolsky and I am the executive director of FoodShare Metro Toronto.

I would like to preface this presentation by stating that it is our position that food banks are not, as the terms of reference for these hearings state, a phenomenon. That would imply an unusual occurrence. Rather, we view the proliferation of food banks and emergency food programs as a consequence of poor government policies.

It is our contention that poverty in Ontario is the direct result of government legislation and that its elimination can only come about through policies and legislation that provide people in need with both the income support and other social programs necessary to live active, healthy lives.

FoodShare was initially established in the fall of 1985 by the city of Toronto as a three-month public awareness campaign. It was after much consideration that FoodShare began providing the public education advocacy component of what has come to be called the emergency food network.

Food banks are recently established institutions, having come about only at the end of the last recession. In less than eight years, the distribution of food by voluntary organizations has shifted from an emergency-based operation with limited access to resources to a well-organized and co-ordinated approach.

An important development that contributed to this institutionalization of food distribution programs was the decision by the provincial government in 1982 to make grants to religious organizations through the winter emergency shelter and assistance program, to enable them to distribute food.

This move by the government was an admission that formal social assistance programs were inadequate. It also sent a message to the public that the provision of food by the voluntary sector was an appropriate activity. We believe that the continued exist-



ence of all forms of emergency food programs is a direct result of government policies.

An indication of this for us is the fact that, while all levels of government recognize a housing crisis that exists throughout the province, little is done about it. Government budgetary priorities rarely address this need, while rent controls and rent review remain ineffective. Rental increases outstrip the cost of living, thousands of people are homeless and there is minimal action on the part of government.

The crisis is deplored, hands are wrung and the people most affected are forced to turn to charities for assistance. People who cannot afford to pay for both rent and food have little choice but to opt for maintaining a roof over their heads. Many people have little choice but to spend money that is earmarked for food on their rent payments.

Many emergency food agencies volunteers feel frustrated knowing that if the people coming to them for help were spending only 30 per cent of their incomes on shelter costs, as the government recommends, then the numbers needing assistance would dramatically diminish. The lack of available, affordable housing is a direct result of poor government policy. Government lands that could be used for housing are instead given to corporations to build ballet-opera houses, Olympic stadiums and Expo sites. At a time when thousands are homeless, the provincial Treasurer has the audacity to boast of a balanced budget. While a balanced budget is a laudable feat, it has come at the direct cost of those most unable to provide for themselves, those most reliant on government support.

This is not only poor government policy. It is also poor economic policy. People with stable places to live are more able to secure employment. They will thus have a greater propensity to create wealth for the province and the nation through their contribution of taxes and to the gross national product.

The second example is as well known. It has to do with income support programs, including minimum wage rates, social assistance, the guaranteed annual income system for the disabled, old age security and all other government income programs. Even with Ontario's most recent welfare reforms, thousands of people are still forced to struggle well below the poverty line.

It is estimated that a single person living on general welfare assistance, a rate legislated by the provincial government, lives \$10,000 below the poverty line. Similarly, a single parent with two children lives \$15,000 below and a two-parent family with two children lives \$20,000 below. These are clearly government policies dictated with little regard for the individuals whose lives are affected by these decisions.

## 1100

What has any of this to do with food banks and emergency food programs? We hope that through these formal hearings the government will acknowledge that the emergency food distribution system provides it with the rationale for inaction and that the emergency food network operates as a secondary welfare system.

The recent provincial welfare reforms, as they affected Metropolitan Toronto, only provided for a six per cent increase in welfare rates, while the municipal cost of living rose by 6.2 per cent. People were left reliant on government assistance with less than they had previously received. At the same time, the provincial government dismantled the emergency shelter and assistance program.

The government's rationale for this was that the welfare reforms would have such positive effects that the number of people needing assistance would dramatically decline. This, unfortunately, was decided without any evaluation of the actual

financial impacts of the welfare reforms. Both Metro and provincial welfare staff continue to refer clients to emergency food programs for assistance. Clearly government employees recognize the limitations of the reforms, as is demonstrated by their continued reliance on food banks to supplement their clients' inadequate incomes.

Finally, the fact that neither the provincial nor Metropolitan governments have taken the time to thoroughly advertise or explain the new supports to employment program to welfare recipients—this is in direct contradiction to the minister's previous comments—has meant that out of a case load of 35,000 individuals in Metro Toronto on the welfare rolls, fewer than 200 have enrolled in STEP. This is less than 0.6 per cent. These numbers were provided to us by Ray Lazenick from Metro welfare.

As I stated at the beginning of this presentation, FoodShare Metro Toronto believes that food banks and the fact that people are not able to purchase their own food is a direct consequence of wrongheaded government policies. We have presented but a few examples to support our contentions. Many more go unmentioned.

All is not lost, though. There exist a number of programs that the government can implement to alleviate the poverty that thousands of people in Ontario are forced to live with. There is little need for further study or research into the phenomenon of food banks, nor as the minister stated earlier, about setting up a new committee to make a series of recommendations. The minister came in with a book that had 274 recommendations in it.

The Ontario government commissioned the report from the Social Assistance Review Committee. This committee released its findings more than one and a half years ago. Several of the recommendations have been implemented, although the five stages of welfare reform envisioned by the committee have been totally abrogated.

The SARC report contained a vision for welfare reform. We believe that these findings should not be forgotten. As the report stated: "Tinkering"—with welfare reform—"is not enough. The problems are such that they require a major restructuring of the social assistance program as well as changes in related programs and the income security system as a whole." The key finding in the report, which is familiar to any social assistant recipient, is the inadequacy of benefits.

SARC called for a formula for social assistance rates that would consider community norms and standards, and that would pick up the disparity between Metro Toronto and other urban centres versus rural centres, and be based on a market basket of necessary goods and services.

We believe that if the government is sincere in its concern about the phenomenon of food banks, then the adequacy of social assistance benefits must be addressed and this must be done immediately.

Agencies that were established as short-term programs are beginning to reduce their hours of service. Staff and volunteers are tired and demoralized after many years of promised reforms. The government's reliance on the voluntary sector to make up for shortcomings in providing people with the basic necessities for healthy lives can no longer continue.

We recommend, to truly take people out of poverty, that the government immediately:

1. Establish a formula for adequate social assistance rates and that these be based on a market basket of necessary goods and services, as outlined in Transitions, taking into consideration regional differences;

2. Commit itself to the construction of necessary subsidized housing across the province;

3. Expand skills training programs so as to avoid ghettoizing social assistant recipients in low-waged, unskilled employment;

4. Provide child care spaces so as to allow all those who seek employment or training the opportunity to do so.

These are the types of legislation that will take more than 500,000 social assistance beneficiaries and working poor people out of poverty, and will mean the end of food banks. This after all is our goal. We are convinced that the government has not only the power, as I said, to enshrine poverty within various laws, but it also has the authority to reverse these decisions and ensure that all people in Ontario live in dignity.

**Mr Allen:** I do not know whether it is possible to answer this question, but inevitably it is one, I suppose, that ministry bureaucrats will want to tinker with. Has anybody estimated the total value of goods and services, the equivalents of personnel, volunteer hours, etc, that go into the total food bank operation in Metro Toronto, and emergency food services?

**Mr Yampolsky:** I believe the people from Daily Bread Food Bank have done the calculation that is referred to their own organization. I presume Gerard Kennedy could elaborate on that.

From our own side of it, we have never actually put dollar amounts on it. We talk about person hours and the types of person hours. We have referred over 15,000 people in the past year, because it is one of the services we provide, to emergency food programs. Tailoring that, you are looking at thousands of person-hours not just on our end, but on the agency end when they are delivering those types of programs. But no, to my knowledge a dollar amount has not been attached to it.

**Mr Allen:** Is it your impression that there is a dimension of the hunger crisis that is not manageable through the reforms you propose and that emergency food services would still need to address?

**Mr Yampolsky:** Not really. To a certain extent, organizations like the Salvation Army and the Scott Mission have been around for decades and they have helped people through emergency crises. We are no longer dealing with just emergencies. We are dealing with regularized systemic issues that need to be addressed, and by addressing that we can then go back and have agencies that only address the emergencies.

**Mr Faubert:** You indicated that the provincial and metropolitan governments have not taken the time to either advertise or explain the STEP program. You were obviously discussing this with Metro social services. Did you ask them why they have not taken this step?

**Mr Yampolsky:** Part of it is because when the original reforms were announced in May, there was a budget item by the provincial government to include advertising of all the new reforms. That money, to my knowledge, has not been spent. There has been no published material that has come out of either the Metro government or the provincial government to advertise these programs. I know that the community legal clinics have developed a brochure that identifies and explains STEP in very simple basic terms. They offered the provincial government as many copies as it wanted to distribute so that the government would not have to go out and duplicate the efforts, and that was turned down.

**Mr Faubert:** Metro, in its day-to-day contact with all of its case load, does not in fact advise of this program?

**Mr Yampolsky:** They advise of the program as best they can with their limited staff, to my knowledge.

**Mr Faubert:** Metro has a limited staff?

**Mr Yampolsky:** As far as I know, yes.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** I wonder if you could tell us what was the date for those figures that Ray gave you?

**Mr Yampolsky:** I am sorry?

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** The figure of the 200 who enrolled in STEP: What was the cutoff date of that? Do you remember?

**Mr Yampolsky:** This was as of January.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** January 1990. Can we ask the ministry maybe to get us some information, please, because this seems to contradict in a major way the paragraph on page 10 of the minister's statement. I wonder if the ministry can provide us a breakdown of this group of 6,000 plus that are participating in STEP across the province and how these figures relate year over year, because in some ways taking it from September to January does not really mean very much unless you compare it year over year for other kinds of trends, and how many of those people actually went through STEP, as it were, rather than just getting some kind of work on their own and are just doing what people on family benefits have done over the years: gone on and off employment on a fairly irregular kind of basis.

1110

**The Chair:** You are looking basically at the top of page 10?

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** The second paragraph on page 10 needs an awful lot more explanation because it seems to be contradicted by the straightforward information from Metro Toronto. We may want to go to Metro Toronto to get more of a definition of how many of its people are receiving earnings in addition to that which they are receiving from family benefits and why they have not included them in STEP. I think what we have here is a little propaganda war and it would be interesting to see what the actual reality is between the statistics.

**The Chair:** I hope we will be able to get that by tomorrow.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** I am sure we will. I am sure they have already worked it through to provide us with the best statistics they could and kept all the others behind.

**Mr Jackson:** I also wanted to request on that same point. We did not get an opportunity to cross-examine the minister, but he makes extensive reference to access to health benefits and he talks about the loss of health benefits. Since we have changed from a premium system to a taxation system, I just wonder to what extent that information is relative.

**The Chair:** Would you have the exact page of the minister's presentation you want further information on?

**Mr Jackson:** My notes talk about STEP.

**Mr Neumann:** Supplementary health benefits.

**Mr Jackson:** Yes, supplementary health benefits. If they are talking about the Ontario drug benefit plan, fine.

**The Chair:** Could you give us the exact page.

**Mr Jackson:** I am looking for it.



**The Chair:** I think it will be very helpful in getting a quick answer if you have the exact page you want further information on.

**Mr Jackson:** Page 8.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** Paragraph 3.

**Mr Jackson:** That is correct; paragraph 3.

**The Chair:** "Health benefits are no longer withdrawn from those who miss the eligibility...." You want further information on paragraph 3 on page 8. Is that all in that area?

**Mr Jackson:** As it relates to the employer health tax and the ODB and any others. I would like to know specifically what he is talking about in terms of increased access when nobody pays premiums in this province any longer.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr Yampolsky. Your brief certainly did engender new thinking.

#### DAILY BREAD FOOD BANK

**The Chair:** Mr Kennedy, please. Mr Kennedy has been given 25 minutes. I understand five minutes of submission is included in that, and you may want to call other members of your group to help you with the last five minutes if you want to in summation.

**Mr Kennedy:** I am here representing the Daily Bread Food Bank, which is the largest food bank operation in Ontario. It was also the first, with due deference to our colleagues from Waterloo who started at approximately the same time.

In 1983 we saw the first organized food bank in terms of a special effort on the part of private interests to provide organized and substantial support to people in need. The reference point that I think I have to recommend for you in terms of understanding food banks and their fit with the social assistance system is along the lines of food relief. As surely as in a Third World country, as surely as in any other context where it is relevant, we are talking about food relief taking place in Ontario.

**The Chair:** Mr Kennedy has informed me through our clerk that the written brief is not available at the present time but he will be providing a written brief. So you may want to make some little notes as Mr Kennedy goes along if you want to ask questions.

**Mr Kennedy:** The type of food deprivation that we look at in Ontario is recognized and documented by international people dealing with hunger, but we are talking about what they call the simplest type of food deprivation. It is based on food poverty. There is food in Ontario in abundance and yet there is a denial, in the way we are structured, of income to people to access that food. Therefore we have food banks shipping, in our instance, 300 tons of food per month through 200 programs to 84,000 people. It is unfortunately not a physical site that we can show you today, but I think you would agree if you saw visually the volunteers' cars, trucks and vans loading up to the axles with the product we get from the food industry and from members of the public. It is indeed food relief.

It is a circumstance that has been visited on the province gradually in the sense that there has been a deterioration in the provision of assistance to people in critical need in direct correlation to the increased costs they have experienced.

Some of the factors that have led to this situation have been the lack of increase for social assistance in the years from 1978 to 1982 when people on assistance lost up to 35 per cent of their purchasing power, and the fact that in the high-increase years for

rent the provisions coming from the provincial and municipal governments only covered 80 per cent of someone's rent.

In anyone's conception, if you only undertake to provide 80 per cent of a cost at a maximum—these were very low amounts that were established, but only 80 per cent. Even the person who was living in the most decrepit accommodations for the least price would still only get 80 cents on the dollar. That remained in place for the last five or six years until 1 January for the people on municipal assistance and 1 February for people on provincial assistance.

What has grown over the last four, five and six years now has been a response system based somewhat on the ability of the community to provide, in the sense that the food resources we have brought on stream in terms of food banks have been something that was not previously available, supplies from the food industry and so forth. What that has done is put them in a position to provide a unique vantage point to people such as yourselves, to the people who are responsible for official assistance systems.

We are in contact fundamentally with 58,000 people on assistance each month. We probably see people on assistance more often than those who are running the assistance systems. In Metropolitan Toronto we see probably 250,000 people over the course of a year in terms of the turnover of people, not necessarily coming each month.

What we find is simply a situation that is not being properly apprehended by the people who bear the legislative responsibilities. What you have, as Loren Freid alluded, is a confusion of public and private responsibilities. It is a confusion that has led to our current situation, which in the fall we called a crisis. It is a crisis of the most immediate form for the people who are personally affected, but it is also a crisis for the people who have put themselves in the position of trying to bridge the gap, of trying to provide humanitarian assistance to people who run out of food and run out of the ability to buy food.

It is also a crisis really for the larger community. It has come to that stage where people are losing faith in the humaneness of our system to provide. We have market driven economics that provide a low unemployment rate and yet thousands of unemployable people or people difficult to employ have been left outside that equation.

Probably in the order of 70 per cent of the people attending food banks are people who fit that difficult or hard-to-employ category. The remainder are essentially working. Only a small percentage are people who are unemployed, who could not work. There needs to be a specific provision for those people in any response that comes forward in terms of future welfare reform.

The special perspective of the food bank comes from dealing with people immediately and from a street perspective. The crisis we see there visited upon people is based around factors such as the fact that the average income of people attending food banks is 50 per cent and 60 per cent below the poverty line.

I think most of you on the committee will deal with maximums in terms of social assistance. The reality is even less. The reality after rent is such that people using food banks in Metropolitan Toronto, living in private market rental housing, have only \$22 left over per person per week to pay for every other cost besides shelter. So \$22 a week is what they look to to provide for their food, their clothing, their laundry, their personal hygiene needs, anything and everything that the rest of us take for granted.

I think that if we are going to put this problem in a perspective where we can deal with it, we need to invite you as members of the committee, as part of your summation, to say: "Is that enough? Is that something we can subscribe to, a longer process? Is that something we can wait for to be redressed, that type of situation?"



That was an average income. Fully one third of the people using food banks are in a situation where we determine that because they only have \$12 per week left over after they have paid their rent, they are susceptible to losing their shelter. Indeed there is a tremendous amount of forced mobility among the people using food banks, people who cannot afford to stay in the shelter they are in.

You are all aware of the situation attending large metropolitan centres in terms of rental vacancy. What that means is that people who are currently using food banks are out there in a marketplace for rent that is not at all favourable and are forced to move time and time again simply because they cannot afford the rent.

We think that indication is perhaps the gravest indication of the future crisis in terms of what is now a fairly invisible problem. Most of the people we serve are housed in at least some condition, yet that situation may change because it is a deteriorating situation. The \$22 that people have left over after paying for rent is 20 per cent less than they had a year and a half from the time we took those figures in our survey in March 1989.

## 1120

We look at the situation in terms of food banks as one that has been subordinated to the larger issues of welfare reform, yet we look at it from the standpoint of people who are dealing with people on a day-to-day basis and we have to say that not enough has happened and not enough seems to be intended to happen to be of a real difference to the people who are involved. We have to say that the crisis is not really being recognized. I think if we are going to have any success here today, we need to entertain all manner of questions that you have to assure you that crisis is real.

What is being visited upon the people who are attending food banks is something very serious. It speaks to a level of acute poverty in the sense of figures that show, for example, that Canada has the second worst rate of child acute poverty of all industrialized nations. There is something occurring out there in Toronto that is quite contrary to what we mostly hear from in terms of public policymakers and in terms of the general norms that most of us seem to be used to about Metropolitan Toronto.

I think the main thing we want to leave you with from the standpoint of food banks is to know that we cannot continue with the status quo. What Loren Freid of North York Harvest Food Bank said, that we cannot be taken for granted, is not rhetoric, it is reality.

Food banks have operated for six years with methods—for example, at Daily Bread Food Bank we utilize donated space. We have three warehouses. All of them are donated and all of them could disappear tomorrow. Eighty per cent of the food that comes in comes in on donated trucking. Most of our services are performed by volunteers. There are physical limitations to how large you can make a food relief or a secondary food distribution system.

So the time for decision is at hand for those groups, and I know for many other groups around the province, in terms of how you sustain this. Frankly, the main reason that you see another dimension of crisis, which is a crisis of faith in government and in all decision-makers in terms of not dealing with this problem, which has been felt by the church, religious people and community people, is because they have been told to wait so many times. Even though social assistance review was announced in April, nothing occurred until October. Even though the SARC report was announced in July 1986, nothing came forward until September 1988. Even though ESAP was supposed to be a one-year temporary measure in 1983, it was not until July 1986 that something happened in terms of SARC.

So what you have are people who have been standing there with their fingers in the dike, feeling that they are providing an essential service, crisis relief of a short-term nature, and finding more and more that the demands made upon them by people sitting across the table from them are the type that they as individual volunteers and people from the community cannot deal with. We as a society are losing out by having them remaindered to people who do not have the tools or the resources or whatever to deal with those things.

I think part of your task here today in terms of understanding food banks is to understand that. There are people out there, the most natural constituency to be allied with people in the government and in general who are trying to assist people in need, who are disenchanted, who have had their faith shaken by the fact that it seems not to be taken seriously, that food banks are not being addressed directly.

We need you as a committee and as elected members to respond directly to the idea of whether you want food banks to be a permanent feature in Ontario, because the time is coming when the Daily Bread Food Bank and the other food banks have to answer that question. We need from the elected officials a simple response to that question as well.

The crisis we are experiencing as individual organizations is exemplified by one of our organizations, Church Army, which served 1,200 people in December and cut back to 400 in January, closing last week. We have no backup provisions to provide for those 1,200 people who can no longer be served at Church Army on Brunswick Avenue. There is no automatic response, there is no food bank industry out there that can absorb people from whichever direction they come. There is that sense, you should know, of very precarious features to this system in terms of what keeps it together.

The very goodwill that could provide individualized support, could provide a very vibrant community response in appropriate areas, is being eroded. People are being told that the most important thing they can do is pack food, make sure there are enough canned beans on the shelf, take food down to firehalls and basically perform an exercise that we all know is inefficient and ineffective, in the sense of food banks contrasted with the modern way that we distribute food to everyone else who can afford it in this country.

When you look at the illustration of what we do with people in the food drive, we ask them to give cans of food to a firehall or a church or a school. We take those cans of food, we aggregate them together, we get thousands of volunteers to sort them and we put them back in the cases in which they arrived at the store. This is the type of system we have had to resort to. I think in the process we have excited a fair amount of public concern, which you as policymakers can translate into public support for the kind of reforms that are in the SARC report.

We come here also with some idea that this is not just a time of crisis; it is also one of opportunity. When we look at the effect of social assistance reforms to date, we have some preliminary indications that in fact the type of increases that the food bank system has experienced over the past years have been stabilized, again emphasizing preliminary figures from the month of January which show a five per cent decrease in the numbers of people served in Metropolitan Toronto.

The framework that you should understand is that the welfare reforms were directed, in terms of their initial benefit increases, at the types of people that most use food banks: children and women with sole responsibilities for raising those children and for families in general.

However, they were only a catch-up and the most that we can expect from these reforms over time, we feel, is in the order of 15 to 20 per cent, even though we have seen a five per cent decrease versus an increase last year of 18 per cent and the year before of 35 per cent. That is not accounting for other factors such as the effect of federal unemployment insurance changes, such as the effect of the economy in general because we understand that welfare numbers are again on the increase.

But certainly we feel strongly that our knowledge of the people that use food banks is that if they have the money to buy food, they will do so. So if you entertain doubts about whether or not more money will make a difference, I think that we can provide to you some appreciation that people that are on assistance now, given access to adequate money, will use food banks less or not at all, if they have enough money to buy food. They have indicated so in surveys that we have taken.

**The Chair:** Mr Kennedy, I have four people who would like to ask questions. Are you ready to sum up?

**Mr Kennedy:** Yes, I am. What we would indicate for your priority intervention as a committee in terms of advising the ministry and the government are adequate benefits. There is no substitute for amount of money given to people who are vulnerable, who cannot work, that is enough to support a reasonable standard of living. That does not exist now. If the community cannot get a commitment to that, then I think that we will continue to see the kind of erosion that is built in right now.

We also recommend for your consideration the idea of an emergency benefit, something that, as long as it is a lack of government resources that constrains us giving enough money to people who are in need, then there should be some flexibility and humaneness on the part of the government system that provides for emergencies. In the SARC report it is recommended that current discretionary benefits that are necessities be made mandatory. In that spirit we would see emergency benefits being provided as a mandatory benefit to people on assistance.

We would also advise that we support the need for a council of recipients to advise the ministry and that some other consultation mechanism be set up so that people from food banks need not have to depute to committees, that they need not find some of the practical solutions through the newspaper in presenting the situation, that there is a willingness to work if we can get a mandate on the part of the government to carry forward with the kind of jobs that are at hand.

I would sum up that by saying that we regard this juncture, which is the first time that the government or aspects of the government have concentrated on the need for food banks, as very seminal in the whole food bank movement in this province. We look to you and to your colleagues in the Legislature to tell us what should be done in the future and how we deal with the very real problems that arise at least in part, as other people have illustrated, from areas that are directly in your sphere.

**Mr Neumann:** Last week I met with the people in our community, the city of Brantford, who provide this service, churches and food banks and so on. They indicated to me that they have noticed some change in the people who are coming to them for assistance as a result of the changes in the shelter allowance formula and so on. Despite the improvements, they noted that there was still a need in the area of the working poor, and I do not think very many of the presenters so far have touched on that. You have focused mainly on the people who are on government assistance. Do you see many working poor come to your agency and do you feel that there is a need to change the minimum wage

laws in any way, because no one has mentioned this up to this point?

**Mr Kennedy:** I think that is probably self-editing. About 19 per cent of the people who use food banks have some working income in Metropolitan Toronto in the last year, which is an increase from 12 per cent. We do not know the exact amount of money that they make, but certainly it would indicate that it is in and around minimum wage, and with part-time work perhaps less. So the fact that minimum wage has lost 40 per cent against the average industrial wage is a significant concern.

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The SARC report does not ignore working people and the supports to employment program, STEP, could accommodate working people, depending on the definition by municipalities. It is very important that they become aware of it. I am reminded that in our most recent survey we found out that 65 per cent of the people on assistance were not aware of the ability for them to work. In other words, 65 per cent of the people using food banks had no knowledge of STEP, and 75 per cent of the people who had other incomes, many of them working, also did not know about STEP: therefore, how to access STEP or the beginning of that. So the minimum wage or some government assistance, two people who are currently working, as exists in other provinces, is important.

I think that we do not want to miss the fact that the majority of people who are on assistance have been deemed by the system to be unemployable or hard to employ, and therefore their incomes are of paramount importance. Also their incomes are the most immediate thing that you can do to prevent their need for food banks and to prevent the fact that they go hungry despite the existence of food banks.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** Gerard, I am also delighted that Richard Allen took the initiative to have this kind of hearing take place. I think it is timely from both perspectives, both the crisis and the opportunity, as you were saying.

I have one statistical question and one larger policy question. When I did the welfare diet thing back in 1982, we worked out \$56 per month left over for a single employable on welfare. When you do your \$22-a-week figure, I was not clear, is this an average that you are hearing back on surveys or is this for a particular group within the structure? I was not clear on that when you were talking about it.

**Mr Kennedy:** That \$22 reflects an amount for a family of three. The situation is somewhat worse for higher groups in terms of larger-sized families.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** So that is even with the new initiatives and the concentration on family in the first—

**Mr Kennedy:** I want to emphasize that the \$22 is a figure based from before the welfare increases in terms of its average.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** Pre-January 1990.

**Mr Kennedy:** But those are figures that we will have within a matter of a couple of weeks, because we are currently surveying the people using food banks.

**The Chair:** Because this is recorded and because people read it, would you be very specific what the \$22 is then?

**Mr Kennedy:** Yes, the \$22 reflects the average income for a family of three using food banks in March 1989.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** The leftover on a weekly basis after—



**The Chair:** Is that \$22 per person?

**Mr Kennedy:** Per person, which is left over after shelter costs are paid.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. That will help.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** The policy question I have is to do with sort of doing things by quarters and halves and that sort of thing. If the initiatives that have been taken to date out of Transitions have arrested the growth so far in your experience, is there a danger that a small drop in numbers, or even a marginal one of 15 per cent or so like you were suggesting, might in fact make more food banks susceptible to closing because the notion that the need is less will start to occur, even though the preponderance will still be requiring it, if you follow what I mean? Is there some danger that if this initiative is left where it is, it could be in fact very, very dangerous, that the infrastructure of food banks could collapse?

**Mr Kennedy:** Absolutely. It is a critical time right now, where we cannot control the context in the sense that people may perceive that the need goes away. We had many, many people at the time of the budget last year who assumed that everything was taken care of, that the putative \$450 million was going to solve all of the problems. So it is important that we recognize some of the short-term.

What we are suggesting is that because that is a factor, other things are a factor in the ability of food banks to sustain the level of assistance they provide, that the government also look at providing a short-term benefit for its people on assistance and perhaps for other people. It would have confirmed the notion of government responsibility and be the most direct way of reducing those numbers.

We do not consider the five per cent that we have experienced so far on a very preliminary basis to be significant yet. We would certainly say for now, for the matter of people out there wondering, that the effect of welfare reforms, which basically only came into effect in large measure, in dollar measure, 1 January and 1 February is yet to be told. But that preliminary indication is there and so we wanted to bring it forward today.

**Mr D. W. Smith:** Have you had the opportunity to work in other areas besides Toronto?

**Mr Kennedy:** Yes.

**Mr D. W. Smith:** Do you see the same percentage problem? I presume a certain percentage of people are in your food bank area or in your food banks, period. Do you see the same percentage all across wherever you have had the opportunity to work?

**Mr Kennedy:** There is a variance. Here we have a much higher number of vulnerable people, people who find it difficult to find work, who will remain on assistance and who are having to use food banks. In terms of the proportion of the population, Toronto has a use of food banks that is above average for Canada. Approximately 2.1 or 2.2 per cent of the population per month and something over 8 per cent a year are using food banks. There are higher uses in Saskatchewan and New Brunswick, but we are definitely in the top ranks of communities where food bank use is required. That is based on the first figures that have come from food bank use across the country, and this is not necessarily a normative situation.

What I would add, because you asked my experiences, is that I find that the situations of people here, by degree, are much worse, that the living accommodations that they are in are much worse, that the psychological isolation that people feel in a city

where wealth is so ostentatious is much worse and the incidence of children also appears to be much worse.

**Mr D. W. Smith:** Do you see these families that you do see oftener than once a month?

**Mr Kennedy:** The most common answer to that would be no, but some do. An average use would be 1.2 or 1.3 uses of the food bank, indicating that there are a proportion of people who, yes, have to come more than once a month. But I have to also use the opportunity to tell you that many of the programs have had to restrict use to once a month arbitrarily, reflecting their capacities and not necessarily the need of the people themselves.

**Mr Jackson:** Briefly, Gerard, thank you for an excellent brief. I am pleased that you gave us specific recommendations, which was going to be my question. But you did hit on your third recommendation a council of recipients. That sounds like, but I know it is not the same as, what the minister referred to as an advisory group on the new social assistance legislation, and that there would be recipients. I think I understand what the minister was talking about, and he apologized for the long time frames, but could you expand on what you meant by the council of recipients and how you envisage that recommendation?

**Mr Kennedy:** That recommendation is very simple, that people from across the province be mandated to participate, people who are on assistance, in an advisory group to the minister, and that important changes in the system be put to them before they are implemented or before they are too far along in the system so that the minister has the benefit of that type of input, because we find that most of the answers in terms of the practical implications of all these things come from the people themselves.

We hold a survey for people, for example, once a year, 3,000 households, and people fairly want to say for an hour on end what needs to be done. There are people who are living this experience who need to be listened to on a more ongoing basis. Their input is practical and it is inefficient not to have it. A council of recipients would be something mandated and paid for by the department which would have some form of mandate to see policy before it is implemented, some form of mandate to have the minister consult with it.

Then I also suggested that there be a different mechanism for the service providers to know what is happening within government, to give their input, their data and their insights somewhere where it can be used and not necessarily have to go through the other indirect means to see it taken up.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. As you can see, you did engender many questions. We will look forward to having your brief presented to us in writing if that is at all possible, especially regarding the recommendations that you want us to consider. When do you foresee getting that to us, Mr Kennedy?

**Mr Kennedy:** Some time this afternoon or tomorrow morning.

**The Chair:** Thank you. We will have it then for our consideration.

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#### PARKDALE ACTIVITY AND RECREATION CENTRE

**The Chair:** Mr Littman, please. I understand, Mr Littman, that you are being given 10 minutes in this presentation this morning, so perhaps you would like to give some of that to questions that we would present.

**Mr Littman:** First, I would like to introduce two companions, Michele Williams and Don Sharman. I will not speak very long at all. I would hope that questions would take up most of the time.

**The Chair:** Are you all from the Parkdale Activity and Recreation Centre?

**Mr Littman:** We are. I am one of the staff at PARC and PARC is a community centre for ex-psychiatric patients who are living in the community. They are a group of people who suffer quite directly when there are any imbalances in our economy.

Probably the best way to proceed would be to let Don and Michele talk a little bit about some of the events that have transpired in their lives and then perhaps questions after that.

**The Chair:** That will be very helpful. Michele, would you like to begin?

**Ms Williams:** My name is Michele Williams. I am on staff at PARC. I am also a single parent who was unemployed for the first two years after my daughter was born. I used food banks only when necessary, which was more often than I would have liked. But when one has a child and one is raising one on its own, that child becomes the most important thing, so I used to do without so that my daughter would have good food. I ended up with really poor health because of that.

It is very hard getting off social assistance for single parents. You are penalized. If you earn too much, you lose your drug benefits; you lose your dental benefits. There is a tendency to work and then not work, and work and not work. I went to school. I could not afford to keep doing that, so I went back on family benefits. I just want you to know that we do not choose to stay on social assistance most of the time. Most of the time it is not a choice.

The only reason I am working now is that I took a big chance and I got lucky, or else I would still be sitting on family benefits, going to school, working when I can and having a very miserable life.

**The Chair:** Michele, do you want to tell us a little bit about the chance you took, the risk?

**Ms Williams:** I applied for a job at PARC that I had very little school experience for, but a lot of life experience and I got lucky. They thought I was worth it and they hired me. Other than that, if I had not been encouraged to take that chance, I would not be there today.

**Mr Sharman:** My name is Don Sharman, as was just told you. I have been living on the streets since about 1970, something like that. I crawl off them one in a bit, but I usually end up back on them because poverty has not only stolen me; it still has me. I am a prisoner of poverty.

Family benefits more or less pay me to hide, I think. They do not want to deal with me; they want to hide me. I want to go back to school. I want to join the workforce again, but I cannot put down on the application that I have not done a sole thing since at least 1984. I have been in and out of the system, whether it be jail or a psych hospital. So every time I tell my worker that I want off FBA, FBA basically says, "Well, we'll phone you." You might not have a phone but they will phone you anyway.

Many of my friends have passed away on the street too, and it is not because of anything else but poverty. It is just poverty that put them there; it is poverty that is keeping them there. I know people who have been on social assistance since the 1960s. They go out and find a job, but they realize, on what they bring home, why should they go out for eight hours a day, 12 hours a day and

work, when you get your OHIP paid for, your dentistry paid for and everything is paid for if you stay on government assistance?

I was once told by a person who was elected in my neighbourhood that if I wanted off the streets I would have to get married, get her pregnant and maybe they would fit me into subsidized housing, but I do not stand a very good chance of subsidized housing because I am not married and I cannot get pregnant.

There is a prejudice against me too. If you do not have a fixed address, they will not help you, and if you do have a fixed address, you stay there. Even if you know your address might be a cockroach hotel or just a fire trap, you are stuck there.

You end up back on the streets because you do not like looking at the position you are in. You usually end up back on the streets, because who wants to pay someone over \$400 to go home and see the cockroaches buzzing up and down the wall? So I usually end up back on the streets. I go: "Well, this is \$400. I have to eat." I either get a chance to eat or do not pay rent, or eat and I am still there, you know. It is a catch-22 here: damned if I do, damned if I don't.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Don. Mr Smith, did you want to place your question now?

**Mr D. W. Smith:** Did I hear you say that you have been going through this cycle or problem since the early 1970s?

**Mr Sharman:** Yes, I have.

**Mr D. W. Smith:** Can you tell us why you think you were not able to get out of this cycle or way of living? Can you look back now and see what went wrong or what happened? Can you figure that out?

**Mr Sharman:** Yes. It is so easy to get on social assistance. It is very easy. I left the children's aid society and ended up on the street, so I started on social assistance right away. It is very easy to collect that cheque. It is a trap. Once you get the first cheque, you are going to get a second one. That is usually the way it is.

I do not have very much education, so I cannot really go out looking for a job. Let's put it this way: If I was to go get a training allowance, I will be cut off \$300 to \$400 that I am presently receiving right now. So they are cutting me off because I want to improve myself. Actually, I am penalized because I want to go back to work.

**Mr D. W. Smith:** Can you tell us how much formal education you have had.

**Mr Sharman:** I have grade 5.

**Mr D. W. Smith:** I am just asking the question—maybe you cannot answer it or maybe you do not want to answer—do you have trouble reading an application, a paper, directions?

**Mr Sharman:** No. In 1984 I started to go into the basement of a library in Parkdale. Parkdale prods you to read and they sort of taught me how to fill out applications and that. But you see I have not improved since then. I know what an application looks like, but they scare me when they ask "What have you done for the previous year?" I could say, "Well, I could survive." That is the best thing I know to do, survive, but I cannot put that down on a job application as a qualification. "Hi. I'm a good survivor. How do you like me now? Can I be your dishwasher?"

**The Chair:** Mr Littman, did you want to add anything further now?

**Mr Littman:** Yes. I would respectfully request that the members of this committee keep in mind a couple of questions



through these hearings. One is why we feel we can systematically squander our most valuable resource, which our people, ourselves, our human resource. I would also hope that some consideration could be given to what I believe to be a very fundamental choice. Will we follow the American model and invest in prisons and tragedy and waste, or will we choose not to be politically inept, choose not to be indifferent and self-serving, and perhaps not think of our political and social problems only in the short term?

I believe our agency point of view would say that as the future approaches our solutions do not become less expensive and easier to understand or to discover. In fact whatever actions we take now to address the social and economic disadvantaged are the cheapest way to go.

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**Mr McGuinty:** I am sorry I had to go out to make a phone call and missed the presentation of the young lady with you, but I simply want to say that I have a phrase that my typist gets tired of typing, and it simply is that politics is not policies; politics is people. I want to thank you gentlemen sincerely for giving a very convincing, compelling and moving statement which to my mind is much more telling than all the background papers, position papers, be they from the ministry or other sources. I really appreciate your taking the time to come and speak on behalf of many other people. It took courage. You have insight and I thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Mr Johnston, did you have a final one?

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** I just concur.

**The Chair:** I too would like to join with Mr McGuinty and the other members of the committee in thanking you for coming to add that human touch which I think has moved us all. Thank you Michele, Don, and Mr Littman.

#### SCARBOROUGH CROSSROADS FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE INC

**The Chair:** Julie Morassutti, from the Scarborough Crossroads Family Resource Centre. You have also brought a person with you.

**Mrs Morassutti:** Yes, this is Jacqueline McPherson. She is vice-chair of our board of directors.

**The Chair:** Do you have anything in writing?

**Mrs Morassutti:** I have my rough notes. I do not know whether you would want them.

**The Chair:** I think that certainly what you have to say will be very useful to us and we do have recording here, so please begin.

**Mrs Morassutti:** Okay. I have brought our brochure from the Scarborough Crossroads Family Resource Centre. We are located in a Metropolitan Toronto Housing Authority community in Scarborough. The whole resource centre is run by volunteers who are also residents in our MTHA community, or in one case another MTHA. There are 15 board members.

The reason the resource centre was established was to meet the social needs of our immediate community. As I am sure you are all aware, within MTHA there are people who require extensive and all different kinds of support from the system itself.

In April 1989 the Scarborough poverty conference was held, and in here it extensively talks about what is lacking and what should be implemented in the Scarborough itself. Scarborough

Crossroads has been meeting these needs for the last four years and far exceeding the recommendations that this report alone suggested.

Our most important need to be met in the community is hunger. We have a food bank that runs Monday to Friday from nine to four and from seven to nine in the evening. Our boundaries are Steeles Avenue, Victoria Park Avenue, McCowan and Ellesmere. During the evenings especially we have clients fed our way from other agencies because there are no available food banks open in the evenings.

We also run quite an extensive supplementary food program. We go out with our volunteers and collect the day's food from Centenary Hospital's cafeteria, which we distribute through our resource centre to members of our immediate community and within our boundaries. The people come into the community centre itself and take home the food in containers.

Our food bank has somewhat slightly dropped off in our immediate community because we are now offering the supplementary food program. To date, we have had 205 clients registered, as of the end of February, for our food bank alone this year; that is just January and February. They are not all from within our immediate community, obviously, in our boundary areas.

At Scarborough Crossroads we will always be there to help when the help is needed, but our main concern is that our resource centre was mainly to offer social programs. We have programs that are for young children through to senior citizens. A lot of the time of our two paid staff is spent dispensing food parcels, emergency food and handling our supplementary food. It does take a lot of work and effort. We try to encourage clients who come in to use the centre for all of our programs as well as our food to come back and help in the volunteering. We have an ongoing educational mandate to hopefully help ease these people out of this situation of needing food.

Unfortunately the misconception with people using food banks is, in our particular area and many other MTHAs, that these people are lazy, that they do not want to work, that they would rather spend their money on beer, drugs and so on. I am sure I do not have to tell you that is not true. We also now service quite a number of working poor.

Some of the reasons our clients come and need to use our food bank—we have one example of a member of our community who has been in college for the last four years, has always worked part-time and has always received FBA since she and her husband separated. She has three children. As recently as September her oldest daughter who is now 18 has started college. Because the daughter turned 18, the mother cannot claim her on her family benefits. The daughter was advised that she could collect student welfare. When the daughter applied for the student welfare, she was told that she was only eligible to collect the student welfare if she did not reside in her home.

Obviously there are a lot of problems with that. You have somebody who has taken the initiative to go back to school, has been back four years, graduates in May and now is faced with the situation of having X number of dollars taken off her FBA because her daughter no longer qualifies. Nobody seems to take into consideration that the dollars and cents the government would supply this daughter to be relocated out of the home far exceeds the amount that they are taking away from the mother.

In this situation you have a mother and daughter faced with the decision of what to do they do. The mother chose to try and work increased part-time hours at her job in order to try and make up the difference, because she felt that at this point her daughter, just

entering college, should not really need to be too concerned this first year with trying to juggle a job and the school.

That immediately puts a strain on the mother, who also has two other children in the home. How many hours does she have to spend out of the home just trying to increase her situation? Also, the funding that she receives through her grants to further her education—which again is something that the government pushes, that it would hope most people on any sort of benefit would strive to do—this year she has to pay tax on it. So she further loses \$200, as an approximate amount, because of the fact that she is being subsidized in the system.

In turn, it leaves women especially the decision, do they try to make something of themselves, pick up on the education they finished very early for whatever reason and try to instil in their children that you can get things if you work for it, and yes, we are on a social subsidy at the moment but it does not have to be like that for ever, and it does not have to be that way for you?

You have those women who are trying to go out and do something being hit from both sides. Sadly, for a lot of the women, not this particular woman in question, it is better to stay on FBA. In turn, they do get enough to pay for shelter. Most of them are at that point in subsidized housing. But I have four children of my own. I have to buy shoes for them. I have to clothe them. Because she is on FBA she obviously cannot walk into a store and say: "I am on FBA. Where is my discount?" She is still paying what we have to pay even though she is on that fixed income.

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Another problem with the system itself, and again a need for the food bank, is the fact that you will have clients who mismanage their finances, and whether it be the second or the third week into the month they are phoning their worker or they are phoning their contact within the system for help. They are told: "The cheques will be out soon. Go to the food bank."

Nobody is questioning that woman as to why or how she managed to end up in this situation. We left this morning from the resource centre and there was a woman in there asking for a food parcel. The cheques were out last week. In our situation at Scarborough Crossroads, we are not in a position to ask, "Where did your money go?" In order for us to try to properly educate the clients within our own centre—in sort of an indirect way, I suppose, we do try to educate them, but we do not have the right to ask them where their money went.

You have somebody who is repeatedly in this situation and coming in. Before the first week of the cheque is gone she is in for a food parcel. She has contact with her worker. Do they not see this? This person has openly told the worker, "No, there is no money left."

We feel that the system has to be changed from top to bottom because it is just feeding back into itself and it is very difficult to get out of that situation for a lot of these women. A lot of them are at a level in their life where: "It doesn't matter anyway. Nobody cares. As long as my cheque comes, we will make do." Perhaps it may be too late for some of them, but the important thing to realize in this whole thing is it is the children. Children are somewhat resilient but not after many years of being in this poverty trap. Are they going to be the next ones? Twenty-five years from now, 15 years from now, are people going to be sitting here doing the same thing? I would say the chances are probably just that.

**The Chair:** Julie, I have two people who want to ask questions and we am already over time. Somehow we have got a little bit out of sync here. Mr Faubert, would you place a very brief question.

**Mr Faubert:** Is Tropicana Community Services still active in Birchmount-Finch?

**Mrs Morassutti:** No.

**Mr Faubert:** They were there supplying a program at one time, as I recall.

**Mrs Morassutti:** Yes. That was when the tenants' association was establishing programs. That one is no longer active.

**Mr Faubert:** There is some confusion about the dates. I thought the tenants' group was still active in 1985-86.

**Mrs Morassutti:** This April we will be celebrating our fourth year of incorporation as Scarborough Crossroads.

**Mr Faubert:** You existed at that time. I recall the meetings up at Birchmount.

**Mrs Morassutti:** Yes. It was the tenants' association, not what it is today.

**Mr Faubert:** Does the city of Scarborough have a community worker on site, a program facilitator?

**Mrs Morassutti:** No.

**Mr Faubert:** They did at one time. What happened to that?

**Mr Morassutti:** I do not know whether you are all familiar with sort of being over-agencied. In a lot of Metropolitan Toronto Housing Authority communities, that is what happens. One of our mandates is that living in the community, the people who live there know what they need as far as programming for their children and themselves is concerned, so we have always tried to educate ourselves, within the 15, when we start a program or we are looking towards bringing something in, that we have sort of well searched it ourselves and if at all possible we try to run the program ourselves. Of course we use resource people as our backup. We have been quite successful.

**Mr Villeneuve:** Mrs Morassutti, student welfare is a very touchy situation that you mentioned. A child goes overnight from being in a parent's care to being self-sufficient or independent. Somehow there has to be a better way where parents can have some degree of control the next day when someone's birthday occurs. Is student welfare too easy?

**Mrs Morassutti:** I would not say that student welfare is too easy. I am sure in many cases it is necessary. There are a lot of children who do not have the perfect family situation everywhere. I would imagine at 18 they would prefer not to be called children, but there are a lot of young people who are somewhat self-sufficient and have needed to be because of the family situation they have come from. I think in that instance that student welfare is at least something.

We are talking of this particular person. The child has no need to leave home, has all the proper supports, is quite happy and is willing to contribute something to the home itself. What are we doing? Because this child is just entering the first year of college, it would be very difficult for that child to say: "Well, mom, I am not going because if I go then I can't work fully. I would have to work part-time. I need to study. How much can I work? How are you going to manage?"

In this case this child was concerned for quite some time that the mother was losing X number of dollars, and this is this child going into college. She has finally made it. In the years that she was basically going through school, her mother had managed to do the best for her and more on FBA. All of a sudden, now this child is just about to step into something as important as college,



and the fact is that the child has had the endurance and the intelligence to reach that point. They are faced possibly in some cases with a child turning around saying: "Well, then I won't go. Maybe I should go out and get a full-time job."

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mrs Morassutti. I am sorry, but I have to be very strict with the time lines.

**Mrs Morassutti:** That is okay.

### YONGE STREET MISSION

**The Chair:** May I have Ms Mackenzie, representing the Yonge Street Mission? Would you like to introduce your copresenter.

**Ms Mackenzie:** I am Bonnie Mackenzie and this is Marilyn Savoy. Marilyn comes to the food bank at the Yonge Street Mission.

Before I talk about the mission, I would like to maybe give you a little bit of background on myself in that I have been on both sides of the fence. I brought up four children on family benefits, went back to school for my grade 12 while working part-time doing housework, because always three quarters of my cheque would pay my rent.

I do not know whether it is the food shortage that is the biggest worry. If something could be done about the rent-gouging that is happening, if there was not so much rent taken out of the cheque, more people would have money in their pockets to spend and buy food.

I am working full-time but now I classed as working poor because the job I am working in, four months into the job, I find I am making less money than when I was on family benefits, which really was discouraging, but I prefer to work.

As a worker at Yonge Street Mission I see a lot of people—elderly people, single people, single-parent families—coming in and needing help at the food bank, but it is not just the poverty from the inner city that we are addressing. I have a little slip here from the Villager where it says, "A thousand families require emergency food in High Park-Swansea area." That tends to be middle-to upper-middle-class people and they are dealing with 1,000 people in that one area.

Basically, if FBA gives more rent, more food money or more money to their cheques, they give it in one hand and the landlord takes it on the other, so it is just a vicious cycle. If, somehow, something could be done to keep the rent ceilings down, so that when someone on any assistance cheque is given a raise, they actually keep the raise and the raise does not go out to the landlord. Marilyn, you have seven children.

**Ms Savoy:** I did, but they are grown up now.

**Ms Mackenzie:** How did you manage to get through the month on family benefits?

1210

**Ms Savoy:** From one place to another. I have always had to fall back on food banks because I am not able to work. I cannot work, absolutely not even one week or I will take sick. I have had to depend on food banks after my cheque to keep my children going and putting them through school, although most of them have dropped out because family benefits will not support my children after 18 so they would drop out of school to find a job.

My second youngest one has dropped out of school to take care of me. She cannot get welfare because she is old enough to work and she will not go to school because I am in such poor health that she is taking care of me. The welfare will not help her.

Nobody will help her and I have to feed her and my youngest boy out of what I am getting just for my son and myself. I have to feed my 18-year-old girl.

**Ms Mackenzie:** Do you find that most of your friends and neighbours not only go to one food bank a month, but that they have a need to go to a number of food banks per month?

**Ms Savoy:** Definitely. They go to three, sometimes four of them out of the month. I have seen myself do that.

**Ms Mackenzie:** It is not only the poverty or the inability to maintain a household for the single-parent family, but also in the Villager over the weekend I saw an article about a lot of elderly also fighting about rents, and the elderly are retired at a time when they are supposed to enjoy life. Here they are having to come down to government offices to fight for more funds so that their rents will not be raised, so that they can manage on the little incomes that some of them are making.

It is not just a question of families. I know single people also have a problem. The high rents make it impossible for people to live on the amount of money the government gives, but if the government does give more money, then that money goes back to landlords and we are back to square one again.

**Mr D. W. Smith:** I will try to keep it short. I do not know how to ask this question in that it may sound like it is prying into your personal life. If you do not want to answer it, do not answer it. You mentioned you were on FBA and now you are out working, but you consider yourself part of the working poor group. At what per hour rate or level of income do you consider your case to be working poor? This is why I say I may be asking too much of a personal question here and if you do not want to answer it, do not.

**Ms Mackenzie:** No problem; I am making \$14,500 from my job. I have a 16-year-old at home. When I was on family benefits, my rent was \$580 and I was getting a cheque for \$873, so three quarters of your cheque is rent. Then I had to work part-time. To pay the rent, you are using your grocery money. In order to survive, I would do housework for some elderly lady who was not able to do her housework. That made up that extra money. You were only allowed, though, to make up to \$200 a month. If you made any more than that, then some was taken off you again. It is like you want to work but—

**Mr D. W. Smith:** You would have to be up \$3,000 or \$4,000 more in salary to even be back to where you were on your family benefits, maybe even more than that.

**Ms Mackenzie:** The national poverty line is \$19,082. I am making \$14,500, which means the job I have right now does not really help me. As a working poor person, I really deeply resent having to go to a food bank. I know thousands of other people who are working poor deeply resent going and probably do without a lot of things so that they do not have to go, or they do not feel that they should be able to go because they are working. They assume: "Well, I'm working full-time. I can't go the food bank. That's for those who are on assistance or government money."

A lot of them just do without quality food because of pride or because they feel it is not their right to go to a food bank. I am sure there could be thousands more going to food banks than there really are now.

### OAKVILLE FARESHARE FOOD BANK

**The Chair:** May I have Mr Tennyson from Oakville.

**Mr Tennyson:** Yes. I did not know when I booked my holidays last February that I would be here at Queen's Park today, but I guess that is just the way it worked out.

I am from Oakville. I represent an agency called Oakville Fareshare Food Bank. People are appalled when they hear Oakville has a food bank, because as most of you I am sure are aware it always has one of the highest per capita incomes in Canada when the yearly statistics come out. This year we were second behind West Vancouver.

I have lived in Oakville all my life. About three years ago I wanted to get involved in some other form of volunteer work. I went to a food bank in Mississauga with the view of maybe spending some of my free time there. A gentleman there running their program, ironically enough, was from Oakville. He said, "We get so many people here from Oakville that it is time somebody from Oakville decided to look after their own problems." He looked at me and said, "Maybe you will be the guy who will the program going."

I went home and discussed the contents of this conversation with a couple of friends and we decided, "Yes, maybe there is a need in Oakville." Much to the chagrin of the mayor, I went up and paid him a courtesy call and told him what we were planning on doing. He just could not believe that there was such a need in Oakville. That has been pretty much the response from that time to this, "We are such a rich town that we do not need anything like that."

I am not here this morning and I am not presumptuous enough to think that I have any solutions to the problem. Those have been adequately represented already. What I thought I would do this morning is just give you some statistics. I heard this gentleman, this honourable MPP here talk about how the need in Ottawa was not that great. I think Oakville is at least as affluent as Ottawa and I can assure you that the problem is very desperate in Oakville.

Although we opened in December 1987, we only had a few families in the first month, so my statistics are basically for 1988 and 1989 and then I will tell you already what has happened in 1990.

In 1988 we had 887 visits to our food bank, which averaged out to 74 visits a month. That is not all different families, so of course some of those were repeaters, but that is how we keep our statistics, on the number of visits. I can tell you after how many families that involves. That came out to 3,159 people or 263 people per month, 40 per cent of which were single parents, mostly single mothers; 32 per cent were what we call working poor which is somewhat over the averages that Gerard alluded to earlier as the situation in Toronto, and a further 16 per cent were general welfare recipients.

In 1989 we had a 92 per cent increase in the number of visits to our food bank. We ended up last year with 1,701 visits to the food bank, which comes out to 142 visits per month, for a total of 5,825 people or 485 people per month. The percentage of single parents fell from 40 per cent to 37 per cent and the percentage of working poor increased from 32 per cent to 35 per cent. Welfare remained pretty much the same.

For January and February 1990 we have already had an 87 per cent increase over the corresponding period in 1989, for the first two months of 1989. In the first two months of this year, we had 357 visits which projected over the year will end up with 3,150 visits to the food bank, which will be approximately 10,000 people who will have received food parcels for 1990.

We take on an average of 25 to 30 new families every month that we are open. Just when I think there are no new people in Oakville who need help, the other day we had three new families

on the first day of the month, which is highly irregular for the first week in the month.

I could best describe the situation in Oakville by using my own situation. I have been employed by Canada Post for the past 18 years, which in itself is a miracle. I do not know how I lasted. My disposable income since 1987 has increased less than four per cent and my rent has gone up 54 per cent in the corresponding period, despite rent controls and everything.

I figured it out last night that within two years, if my personal situation continues, I will have to seek some alternative form of housing within the next two years. I am a single person who lives on my own. I will have to give up my modest one-bedroom apartment if my trend continues and I will have to seek out some other form of accommodation, shared accommodation or whatever.

1220

What are the solutions to this problem? I have no idea. As a former skid road bum, I can tell you that I could not have turned around my own life without an adequate support system from my family and other friends in the community and things like that. What I notice is that most of my clients, most of the people who rely on our food bank, who are straining our resources to the max, have no support system in place that will adequately help them over this rough period of time that they find themselves presently in. I know personally how hard it was for me to turn my life around, with a good support system in place.

Like I said earlier, I do not profess to have the answers to these problems and I do not know where we go from here, but all I know is that the problem, at least in Oakville, is getting to the state now where it is desperate. We are strictly run by volunteers. Nobody in our agency gets paid a cent. I spend 20 hours a week probably and most of my volunteers are getting to the point where they are getting burned out, and we look at the 87 per cent increase already this year. This is after the Social Assistance Review Committee report had already started to be implemented.

After listening to the minister with his presentation first thing this morning I was wondering why we were even here. It sounded so good to me that I thought, "What am I doing here? Why has the situation in Oakville gotten so much worse," with the rosy picture that he was painting.

I guess I will leave it at that, and if anybody has any questions, I will try my best to answer them, although like I said, I do not profess to have any answers and I am not an expert in this field. I am just an ordinary person.

**Mr Allen:** I really do not have a question because I think the testimony has been very, very graphic and very, very pointed. It is the essence of the argument that we have to take to heart, quite frankly, in these next few days.

**Mr D. W. Smith:** I have one short question. Who are the companies or people or individuals—maybe companies more than individuals—who help donate to your food bank?

**Mr Tennyson:** We have no companies that donate. All are individuals. We hustle within the community. We raise money ourselves and we spend a large portion of that money directly on food. We of course are hooked up with Daily Bread, but we do not use it as often as we would like, because we have a transportation problem getting in there and out. If we had full-time employees I am sure we could spend more time tapping into the community resources, but like I say, we are all strictly volunteers who mostly have full-time jobs. It is just a problem.



**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr Tennyson, for personalizing your story.

### STOP 103

**The Chair:** Reverend Richard Myer, please. Stop 103 is where, Reverend?

**Mr Myer:** We are at 1120 Ossington now.

I will put my prop up as soon as possible, so I will not interfere with the sound system.

Stop 103 was started in 1981 by church people and people of goodwill with intentions to help those who fall through the cracks of the social system. During January 1990, 2,200 people received grocery assistance and left our church basement to return to homes that consume up to 80 per cent of their incomes on rent. The food bank industry has grown, and unless we take action as soon as possible, it will become as entrenched as the government-sanctioned adjunct poverty business that has developed in the United States.

The Daily Bread Food Bank distributes food to 180 agencies and 85,000 people per month. Those stats have been utilized to encourage good intentioned of Torontonians into bringing their food to be given away to our city's economic casualties.

Think for a moment about the real cost of this made-in-the-USA 69-cent box of macaroni and cheese. The initial cost is multiplied, and it increases by trips from the store to the firehall. This is not only a fiscal cost but an environmental cost. Think about all the energy that is consumed. The firehall to the Daily Bread Food Bank, the Daily Bread Food Bank to Stop 103 and from Stop 103 to poor people who must live on the public's largess.

That multiplies the cost, but do not forget the paid staff at the Daily Bread Food Bank and its building that is donated but requires energy to heat and maintain, Stop 103's staff and building, the volunteers and staff of all those 180-plus agencies in Metro. That box of 69-cent mac and cheese grows to a price beyond our comprehension, and way beyond, I think, what any of us would be willing to afford or pay for.

What we need is a system that allows poor people the resources to access food for themselves, for them to go directly to the Loblaw's or the Miracle Mart to buy it themselves. Ontario prides itself on its prosperity. The Premier makes speeches abroad about the "L" word, but what we seem to lack is the resolve and good intentions to work on eliminating the scourge of poverty.

Fiscal responsibility seems to be a strong suit of the present government, and upfront investment in the implementation of the SARC report has long-term implications for future governments and budget writers. By spending the money now on the needy, I believe we can limit the need for future expenditures in the ministries of Health and corrections. It is better to help people than to fund future institutions and bureaucracies.

I challenge the Premier and Treasurer to consider the cost-effectiveness of the SARC report. Friday's Toronto Star carried an article on the editorial page that should serve as a warning to us all. Since October's Share Thanksgiving food drive, four Daily Bread food bank agencies have closed their doors and have refused to continue food distribution. These were not people lacking concern or compassion but simply your neighbours who have reached limitations beyond their abilities to respond. Poor people will suffer as more agencies close. As the director of Stop 103, I urge us all to take seriously our responsibilities to all Ontarians, regardless of economic station.

If we learn anything from the SkyDome, and I hope the SkyDome people do not sue me for not using their name without

credit or a copyright mark, it is that if all levels of government, corporations and the community want something bad enough, the resources will be and always are forthcoming. All of us spent \$500 million dollars on one Front Street megaproject. The estimated tab for all phases of SARC is approximately two billion dollars. It is a program that benefits hundreds of thousands of Ontarians across the province and it is, across the province, worth it.

I would ask you that and then entertain any questions for the remainder of my time from the floor.

**Mr Allen:** I want to thank Rick, not just for the report but for the kind of work that he and so many others in this room do on a day-in-day-out basis in this community. But I want to ask, what are the other things that you and people like you in these services could and would be doing if you did not have to be attending to the emergency food supply service? I do not think you were set up initially to do that as your principle objective in life. What are the other support services that you feel are critical for you to be engaging with but that you at this point of time find difficult to provide because of the time you spend on these other services?

**Mr Myer:** I can only tell you from my own context. Before I came here, I had been serving churches for around 14 years in a pastoral capacity. The need was so great that I took the position of the executive director of Stop 103 almost four years ago. But I could be working in a local church context and using my talents and skills in that regard. Churches could be doing their church thing, ministering to the people who come to them. But there is a tremendous waste and loss of manpower in churches and faith groups and agencies in just doing acts of charity that are good acts but are wasting the resources that we all have.

**Mr Allen:** We heard from some of the agencies, and I know this is true of the main food bank in Brantford that offers services beyond the distribution of food, identifying other needs that the people may have and steering them in the right direction, counselling, perhaps job upgrading, skills retraining and so on. Is Stop 103 involved in this?

**Mr Myer:** We do all of the above. One of the main things we do, we work with people who are facing astronomic rent on top of their already limited budgets. There are odd times when we help people with rent. We check out thoroughly with property and the taxation department to make sure in fact people are landlords, and we have subsidized people's rents who are working and who are on assistance. We pick up the economic casualties and basically just patch them up, only to go out and be defeated again and run a terrible gauntlet or treadmill of going from agency to agency. So we are just fixer-uppers and patch-up artists.

**Mr Neumann:** I am disappointed to hear that aspect of it because I was hoping you would be able to give positive stories. I know I have heard locally where people have come in for food and have been given proper counselling and direction and have turned their lives around.

**Mr Myer:** We do that. As a matter of fact, as of this week we are actually reducing our hours by 16, and we are going to be using our time on Wednesday afternoons, I hope, for direct counselling and maybe working with people and helping them to find more affordable housing. The need is so great that if we were open 12 hours a day for seven days a week, we would be filling the door and we would be filling bags full of groceries. So we are reapplying our time and trying to use our resources in areas other than direct food distribution, because it is not working. We are also working towards the kind of awareness that would insist, on the public's behalf and also on behalf of the recipients who come

to us, that they receive the resources that they need to handle their own affairs. That is basically what our goal is: to see that people have the money in their hands to be able to handle their own affairs. We are a charity, and I would love to be able to see the people who come to us be able to make nontaxable donations. That would be marvellous. It is just something we envision and look forward to.

**Mr D. W. Smith:** I am going to ask you the same question I asked the last gentleman from Oakville. Is it only individuals who donate to your food bank as well, or are there some companies?

**Mr Myer:** Moneywise, we receive about 70 per cent of our total funds from private individuals, and we operate with a budget of around \$340,000. There is some corporate donation. Most of our corporate donation, I guess, comes from overruns, stale-dated commodities, which is not really doing people a favour either. It is basically saying that things that are not cosmetically attractive or that the general public does not want is okay for poor people. That is a message that regrettably I have to give people on a daily basis, but I do not like giving it to them because it is a discredit to their own self-worth.

We have a run every week—of course, I will not mention where we get it from—where we pick up fresh fruits and vegetables that you probably would not want and I do not always want, but people have to take them because they do not have the money left to buy them. It is pitiful, but that is the system we work with.

**Mr Faubert:** Just one quick observation, Reverend Myer. I like your example of how much that costs. It really makes you think.

**Mr Myer:** Do you want to buy it?

## AFTERNOON SITTING

The committee resumed at 1405.

**The Chair:** I will call the meeting to order. Our first presentation this afternoon is from the Daily Bread Food Bank.

[Failure of sound system]

**The Chair:** There is a little twinge of light. Here we go. We have got one mike on. Is that going to be okay?

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** I feel the power already—towards speech.

**The Chair:** Maybe I should have started talking earlier. At the moment, everything is okay. I will tell you what we had planned as alternatives if I have to use them.

If I may have Ms Cox come forward, we will get started in the plan I had suggested. Now we are really starting at 2:15, so we will try to keep everything within the time frame of 15 minutes later than normal. Ms Cox, please. You have a page that we have received.

### DAILY BREAD FOOD BANK

**Ms Cox:** You have been very good to me. I think you have received the sheet that I prepared on the figures for Ontario, and I do not want to take up a lot of time, although I will be happy to answer your questions. I just want to point out that this last March there was a Hungercount done of the whole of Canada, in which food banks were asked to report the use in their region of their program. These numbers are taken out of those Canadian Hunger-

**Mr Faubert:** No, I cannot afford it now. By the way, I think we cannot afford it now.

**Mr Myer:** No, we cannot afford it.

**Mr Faubert:** And we as a society cannot afford it, and I think that is the point you are making. But I like the one statement: It is better to help people than to fund future institutions and bureaucracy. I think that is the essence of what we are trying to get to and I think that should be the working philosophy of this committee.

**Mr Myer:** There is a commercial for an oil filter that says basically, "You can pay me now or you can pay me later." That is exactly what we are talking about. An upfront investment now, I think, forgoes future costs, and I think that is what we should keep in mind.

**Mr Faubert:** A point well made.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Reverend Myer, and thank you, all of you on the committee.

**Mr Myer:** Do you want the box of macaroni and cheese for the next food drive?

**The Chair:** I do not think so, thank you.

I want to thank the presenters, as well, for being so co-operative. It is difficult, the time frame under which we are working, but I think this morning has been very well spent.

I will now adjourn this particular sitting of this committee. We will resume again at two o'clock, with presentations from other parts of the province.

The committee recessed at 1234.

count figures and run just for this province. I did this over the weekend, as a matter of fact; this is very hot news that you are getting right now.

The number of individuals served, 196,618, is the most conservative figure I could come up with. There is a definite margin of error in these numbers. If anything, this errs on the side of conservatism rather than being an inflated figure, so it could be much higher. In addition, some communities were not able to report all food bank users, so the number was quite low for those communities. We also had to extrapolate figures for those communities which did not report, and we extrapolated those numbers based on the averages for all the reporting communities, which were 20, including Ottawa and Toronto, the two largest centres, but there are a large number of rural food banks too.

There also was enormous variation in the numbers, so you find, for instance, that although overall, if you look down the page under income sources by household, we came up with 9.7 per cent of families were working, that number might be quite low.

For instance, in Toronto it does not reflect the numbers of people who were both working and collecting welfare at the same time. This just means that their primary source of money was income earned from working. In that area you could get a particularly large variation. You had the testimony this morning from Oakville reporting that 30-something per cent of their people were working people, and that is a typically suburban phenomenon. You find the same thing with the community reporting the largest number of working people using a food bank, being Barrie with



34.6 per cent, down to very, very small percentages. In fact, there is one that reports no working people using its food banks.

I have absolutely no data to support this, but one of the things we wonder about is whether in some instances the municipal and provincial welfare regulations affect the way people use the food bank in their communities and the number of working people who can access it. I think the rest are self-explanatory.

**Mr D. W. Smith:** Just to clarify, municipal welfare is the social services that they provide, provincial welfare is FBA.

**Ms Cox:** Provincial welfare is FBA; municipal welfare is general welfare, GWA.

[Failure of sound system]

**The Chair:** I don't think that was recorded.

**Mr Allen:** It just came on again, I think.

**The Chair:** Anyway, Mr Allen, try again and see if the microphone light goes out again.

**Mr Allen:** Okay; this will be the real test.

My point was that the minister this morning issued a press release headed "Social Assistance Reforms Working," and my commentary is that, notwithstanding the fact that these are 1989 figures, the numbers, on a conservative basis, are almost half the equivalent of the total case load on social assistance in Ontario.

If one pays heed to some of the comments we had this morning and we will hear this afternoon, the numbers on food banks in fact have not dropped. In my community, the lowest increase in one of the food banks, for example, is 48 per cent, which was the children, and for the single adults who were patronizing the same food bank it was 102 per cent. This is the story that one is getting out there in local emergency food services, so I think one has to take the minister's statement with a grain of salt and the statistics we have got before us very, very seriously.

**Mr Faubert:** I have just one question, on income source by household. I note that within here it does not break them down further, and if you are talking about children, this is an important category. What about refugees with children?

**Ms Cox:** Refugees were not counted in that. In fact, in Toronto we did count refugees in our surveys. In our last February survey they counted at around 17 or 18 per cent of food bank users. Again, we are just counting them now. We will not have the data on that for another two or three weeks, but across Ontario we did not count refugees.

**Mr Faubert:** That is an important statistic, because although the federal government promises them the work permits, it has not yet processed them.

**Ms Cox:** Certainly the denial of work permits from the federal government meant an enormous jump in food bank use in downtown Toronto. I cannot speak to across the province. But as those people did gradually get back to work, that was eased. So there should be a significant difference this time.

1420

**The Chair:** Ms Cox, will you be able to present your new findings to us within a reasonable time? When do you expect to have those compiled?

**Ms Cox:** We should have the new findings for Toronto in three to four weeks. The next Hungercount for the whole country will be in March. We probably will not have the data for maybe a month of two afterwards.

**The Chair:** I hope you will pass those along to the clerk of our committee.

**Ms Cox:** I hope you will invite me to do that.

**The Chair:** And certainly to our minister.

**Mr Neumann:** On a question of clarification, could we get a list of the communities that you have included, just to make sure that our community is in or is not in it?

**Ms Cox:** Yes, I would be happy to give that to you. What community is it?

**Mr Neumann:** Brantford.

**Ms Cox:** Brantford is in here.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms Cox.

**Ms Cox:** Thank you for the time.

#### HAMILTON-WENTWORTH REGIONAL FOOD AND SHELTER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**The Chair:** The group from Hamilton, under Ross Robinson, please come forward. I understand Mr Robinson will be introducing his delegation.

**Mr Robinson:** Thank you very much. First, if I may, a little background: The Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Food and Shelter Advisory Committee serves in an advisory and advocacy role with the health services branch of the regional council, and through extension with regional council as a whole in Hamilton-Wentworth. The membership includes 18 agencies which provide a range of services, six of which have a special role in the emergency food area, as well as the provision of other services. My colleagues will introduce themselves.

**Brother MacPhee:** My name is Brother Richard MacPhee. I am from the Good Shepherd Centre in Hamilton.

**Canon Rogers:** My name is Canon Joe Rogers. I am from St Matthew's House in Hamilton.

**Mrs Bolton:** I am Birgitt Bolton, from Wesley Urban Ministries in Hamilton.

**Mrs Geagan:** I am Helen Geagan, from Neighbour to Neighbour, on the mountain in Hamilton.

**Mr Karl:** I am Marty Karl, Mission Services of Hamilton.

**Mr Robinson:** I will make the opening statement.

Needless to say, we share with your committee and with others who are appearing before you in deploring the fact that so many thousands of people in Canada's richest province are hungry. In our view, the issue is not hunger. The real issue is poverty; a wide range of very complex issues that come together and create a situation that is enormously tragic and getting worse and worse.

We feel this very deeply in Hamilton. The most recent numbers indicate that Hamilton has the second-worst situation in Ontario, measured in terms of the percentage of the population that is living under the poverty level. In our view, that situation can only be worse now than it was in 1986, because there have been a number of closures of plants, which adds more people into low-paying service jobs, increases the problem of the working poor and leads to the complexity of the issue.

No one could be more committed to the issue of poverty and hunger than those who are before you and the other members of our organization. Despite that, we do not fully share the view that

you may be hearing in the course of these hearings. We do not feel that food banks should threaten to close their doors at some time in the future, on the assumption that government can and must and will very quickly solve the enormously complex issues relating to food and hunger and poverty.

In our view, this would send a confusing message to the public, who, in the interim, we must depend upon for voluntary support. It would be tragic if they felt they were no longer wanted or needed. We feel it would be unfair to those who will continue to need our services.

We do not have a food bank in Hamilton, in the sense of a free-standing organization that collects and stores and shares food out to other agencies. The foodshare approach in Hamilton is a co-operative approach among the agencies. We feel this is very efficient. It does not involve investing very scarce resources in that separate organization and the co-operative approach gives us the flexibility in response in this, in meeting the needs.

So while we are talking about the possibility of closing food banks, it seems to be what is really on the table is, should we close down the organizations that have been meeting these needs for generations? We are committed to continue meeting those needs.

We have offered a document that expresses our concerns, that offers a profile of poverty in Hamilton. We are not going to take the time to read that now. Rather, I would like you to meet some of the many, many thousands of people, about 20,000 people, who are coming to our organizations every month for food.

**Mrs Bolton:** I will start by putting a face on poverty.

"My name is Mary. I am a single mother of three children. I left an abusive situation. I went to a transition house and, through counselling, decided I needed to get out of my home for the protection of myself and my children.

"That decision was easy. My life now is not so easy. I receive \$925 a month. Out of that, I pay \$565 a month for my apartment, my two-bedroom apartment for myself and my three children. To get into the apartment, I also had to come up with my last month's rent. I was lucky, because a friend lent that to me, but I am paying that back every month and I do not know how.

"I have to spend about \$72 to cover hydro, my phone and cable. You say, 'Why cable?' Cable is our only amusement, our only chance at recreation. That leaves me with \$288 a month, \$72 a week. Out of that \$72 a week, I have to pay for our transportation, our food, our clothing. Could you do it? I sure have a hard time doing it.

"My name is on a list to get into affordable housing, but there are over 1,000 people before me. It will be at least a year before we can get in. Our name is on a list to get the children into day care, but the number of subsidized spots is limited.

"So here I am. I can get my \$925 a month. I do not have enough to feed and clothe my children. I would like to be a productive member of society. There are social reforms in place, yes, so that I might go out to work, but how, without the day care, how, without the money for transport and so on, how can I get started?"

**Mr Robinson:** Thank you, Birgitt. I think Mary's comments underline the complexity of the issues. Yes, we are here to talk about the fact that Mary's family is hungry, but we talked about housing, we talked about day care, we talked about transportation, we talked about the feeling of desperation that can make it so difficult for people to re-enter the productive workforce.

Your thoughts, Helen?

**Mrs Geagan:** "My name is Jean Croden. I am 50 years old. I left school after grade 11 and got married. My husband worked for one of the plants in Hamilton. When it closed a few months

ago, we went on the waiting list for UIC and he started to drink. I don't know where he is now.

"Our apartment costs \$519 a month. Now I'm looking for one that costs less and I found a room for \$353. I'm not sure I have it yet. I've never worked. I know I could probably go to job counselling or retraining, but right now I'm too upset to do that, so I'm going to a local food bank and I hope some time in the future I will be up to trying to work."

**Mr Robinson:** Thank you very much, Helen. It seems to me those comments highlight another aspect of hunger and poverty, of desperation; a person who has to rethink life. She and her husband were doing well. He was never out of work. They felt comfortable. They were looking forward to retirement, and now her life has been shattered.

It is all very well to say, "Why doesn't she go out and get a job?" Even if she could find one, never having worked, how does she develop the personal resources to reorganize her entire life? It is not just a matter of money. Money helps, but it calls for a lot of support services such as our organizations are offering to the community.

How is it to be a kid?

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**Canon Rogers:** "I am 18 years old." If you believe that, you are going to believe quite a few other things.

"I am 18 years old and my name is Joe. Things haven't always been as bad as they are now. I remember when we did have a nice place to live, but that was a long time ago. Then my father left and we had to move out of the place we were living in and go on welfare. One year I moved seven times in school.

"Then things began to even get worse than I thought because my mother had a boyfriend who came to live in our house. I knew I wasn't wanted there and I became tired of being beaten up. So I finally left and lived on the streets for a while. Then finally I was able to get welfare and live in a hotel above a tavern where you heat your food under the tap and eat it out of the can and hope your door holds when the older people who live in the hotel come to do things to you that they may want to do when you don't want them around.

"I attend Parkview school, but I'm not going there much these days because I'm in the cooking class and I can't read the recipes. I'm too embarrassed to go, so I pretend I go to school and then I just wander around and finally, when it gets dark, I go back to the hotel.

"Perhaps some day I'll learn how to read, but I don't know what to do next. We go to the food bank and get a little food and try to live as best we can. I don't see my mother any more because I was told not to come back. However, that's life in Hamilton."

**Mr Robinson:** That is life in Hamilton, not for all of us but for a growing number of kids like Joe. Once again, I think we can see that food is the tip of the iceberg. He has a whole range of challenges before him: functional illiteracy, the fact that he has been abused, the fact that he has nothing to offer in the job market and the fact that he is discouraged and scared to death. It is going to take a lot of support services for Joe to break out of this cycle.

How is it to be an ex-psychiatric patient?

**Brother MacPhee:** "My name is Robert. I am 42 years of age. When I finished high school, I went to university, but university was tough, it was hard and things just got me down. Eventually, I really saw that there was no purpose in life. I attempted suicide.

"I went into a hospital for a short stay and ended up being there for over 20 years. During that time, people cooked for me



and cleaned for me. They told me when to get up and when to go to bed. I had no money. The only thing I had that resembled money was a token to use at the local canteen. Then one day, somebody said: "You can go. You can survive." They gave me a ticket, a great big ticket for survival, and that was \$6,000 a year. Then I went to the world.

"On \$6,000 a year, you can't buy much. When I was in the hospital, they often rewarded good behaviour with cigarettes and I smoked. It helps me to calm my nerves. They promised me that there would be all kinds of people to look after me or to support me in the community. Those promises never became reality.

"Today I live in a room where no cooking is allowed, where you can't have a visitor. I pay \$325 for that room. How do I eat? How do I survive on less than \$600 a month? I go to the local mission, the Good Shepherd Centre, and each day I get a free hot meal. I travel from dropin centre to dropin centre for lunch or breakfast or for just that cup of coffee and someone to listen to me.

"It was so much easier before. It is so difficult now."

**Mr Robinson:** Thank you, Brother Richard.

Deinstitutionalization, many of us would say, made very good philosophical sense relating to those with psychiatric and physical disabilities. The tragedy is that we as a society—and I say society and not just government—have not replaced institutions with the support care and services in the community that are so essential to make that dream of independence come true. Once again, food is the tip of the iceberg. That is only one of the problems that person has.

**The Chair:** I am going to have to remind you that your time is up. It is very difficult for me to do, but you may want to sum up in about 20 seconds.

**Mr Robinson:** Okay, I will sum up in 20 seconds.

We commend government for measures that have been taken. The first steps in implementing the Social Assistance Review Committee report are encouraging, but they touch only a relatively small number of people who are hungry and in poverty. Some might say that Ontario cannot afford to address the issues of poverty, especially in this time when we hear so much about restraint in government spending. Our view is that Ontario cannot afford not to. Poverty is going to prove to be far more costly to all of us than the remedies it takes to fix it, because unless we seriously address such issues as the crisis shortage of affordable housing, the shortage of day care centres and so many of these other complex issues, poverty that is destroying so many thousands of lives today will do infinitely more damage to the social and economic health of Canada's wealthiest province in the future.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much for personalizing the story from Hamilton's point of view.

#### PARTNERS IN MISSION FOOD BANK

**The Chair:** May I have the representatives from Kingston, under Mrs Flanagan. Please begin.

**Mrs Flanagan:** On behalf of the staff and volunteers of Partners in Mission Food Bank, we wish to thank the members of the standing committee on social development for taking their time to hear about the food bank in Kingston.

The greater Kingston area has a population base of 116,000. Situated on Lake Ontario, it comprises the townships of Kingston, Pittsburgh, Ernestown and the city of Kingston proper. Major employers in the area include the federal government, through the

Correctional Service of Canada and Canadian Forces Base Kingston; the provincial government, through the Ministry of Transportation, the Ministry of Correctional Services and OHIP; Queen's University and the Royal Military College; Alcan, Northern Telecom, Celanese Canada, the Urban Transportation Development Corp and Dupont, as well as two major hospitals and several small businesses centred around the tourist industry.

Partners in Mission Food Bank is an ecumenical project sponsored by the Religious Hospitaliers of St Joseph, a congregation of sisters that owns and operates the Hotel Dieu Hospital. Over six years ago, the sisters embarked on a major research project to identify some of the unmet social needs in the area. To their dismay, they discovered that 6,000 people were going to bed hungry each night. The sisters began a monthly food collection program in co-operation with four Roman Catholic churches. All the food collected at that time was forwarded to St Vincent de Paul Society, which had been operating an emergency food aid program serving about 100 families a month, and a hospitality centre that was serving a hot lunch daily to 45 people. Staff and volunteers at St Vincent's were noticing a greater demand for their service and suggested that another food distribution centre be opened.

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On 6 November 1985, Partners in Mission Food Bank was officially opened at the Anglican Church of the Redeemer in Kingston. This direct service/warehouse model food bank had as its main objectives to provide an efficient system of food collection from churches, individuals, groups and food suppliers and to arrange for the distribution of donated food to charitable organizations, groups, families and individuals on a referral basis. Since that time, there are now 93 churches of all denominations that collect food for the food bank, as well as many food retailers, wholesalers, farmers and bakeries that all donate surplus food to us. In addition, many, many community service organizations, educational institutions and others arrange food drives throughout the year. Through all this activity we are also able to receive the financial assistance that we require to run our operation day to day.

Combined with our depot in Amherstview, we are serving over 500 households monthly through our food basket or grocery program. This represents approximately 1,300 men, women and children who rely on our services for their daily sustenance. Over half that number, 650, are children. We also supply food to various agencies that are operating feeding programs. These include agencies that are government funded.

They also benefit from the surplus baked goods from bake shops, with Partners in Mission Food Bank facilitating the distribution to ensure that it is put to good use instead of being discarded. We also distribute to agencies that have no government funding and that, like the food bank, rely on the generosity of the public to sustain them.

Many of these programs include soup kitchens and shelters for homeless people in the greater Kingston area. Approximately \$30,000 worth of food is distributed monthly through Partners in Mission Food Bank.

Three full-time staff and two part-time staff, as well as over 120 volunteers, oversee the day-to-day operations of Partners in Mission. Our 1989 budget shows that our expenses are fast becoming par with the revenue that is generated on our behalf by the public. The majority of our funds have been donated by the general public in the greater Kingston area with a very small percentage coming from any government department—federal,

provincial or municipal. Any money derived from these sources was mainly in the form of employment subsidies.

Our experience has shown that the majority of the households we serve, about 72.1 per cent, are in receipt of some form of government social assistance. Three quarters of these people are paying over 40 per cent of their income on shelter costs. Municipal welfare, provincial welfare, disability pensions, unemployment insurance payments, training allowances, Canada pension, Ontario student assistance program, vocational rehabilitation allowances, widow's and veteran's pension all represent the wide array of government assistance plans as sources of income of people who use our food bank.

Since Partners in Mission Food Bank first opened its doors, in 1985, 4,247 greater Kingston households, or more specifically 11,439 men, women and children, have been assisted with food. These numbers do not include the households served by other agencies in the area such as the Salvation Army and St Vincent de Paul Society. Partners in Mission Food Bank works closely with these other agencies, either by regularly supplying food to assist in running their programs or by meeting monthly to ensure that all our services are not being duplicated.

In 1989, together with our food basket or grocery program and our agency program, Partners in Mission Food Bank distributed over \$380,000 worth of donated food. This represents a 46 per cent increase in delivery of our service since our first full year of operation in 1986. Single parents, male- and female-headed families, couples with no dependants, ex-psychiatric patients, disabled adults, senior citizens, youth and children all constitute the beneficiaries of our service. The most vulnerable group is children.

The right to eat flows directly from the right to live. We know that no one lives on bread alone. However, material food is essential for physical growth and strength. At the present time food banks are one of the effective means of meeting the right to eat by responding to the cry of grief and pain from the thousands of people unable to satisfy their hunger due to a real lack of food. For those depending on social assistance programs for their livelihood, inadequate sums of money are received to meet legitimate living expenses, leaving very little, if any, money to buy sufficient food to survive until the next monthly allowance. For many, therefore, food banks are banks of hope where they can turn for assistance in these trying and difficult situations. The network of food banks across the country works together to meet the basic unmet needs for food. Staff, volunteers and supporters of food banks are a powerful source of hope for the hungry.

Compassion is the key virtue in the faith that acts for justice and peace. It is a virtue that enables us to go beyond our private interests and reach out in solidarity with those in need. For compassion to deepen and expand to the extent we want to join with the oppressed in their struggle, because we now see life through their eyes, a personal contact is needed and food banks provide this opportunity. This contact may be direct or indirect. Basically it affects our compassion and enables our social conscience to grow and expand beyond blaming the victim of hunger or poverty for the state that he is in. We can easily neglect to give attention to the unjust structures which cause unaffordable housing, lack of jobs, lack of education and lack of subsidized day care centres for children.

Over the past eight to 10 years there has been a united front of people of goodwill from all walks of life who have increased their direct assistance to feed the hungry through the services given by the 130 food banks throughout Canada alone. The growth and development of compassion, due to the awareness and in some instances exposure to the hungry, is very real, deep and

lasting in the greater Kingston area. The generous and continuous outpouring of food, money and time is a direct expression of the love and concern our citizens have for the hungry.

Our recommendations to the Ontario government would include the following:

For the government of Ontario to enact a policy of full employment so that all Ontarians would have an opportunity to provide for themselves;

That the government of Ontario raise the minimum wage to \$6.50 an hour in keeping with the real cost of living;

That the government of Ontario become committed to enacting legislation from the recommendations of the Transitions report.

**The Chair:** Thank you for the appendices. I think they are quite helpful.

**Mr Keyes:** Thank you, Suzanne, for the presentation. I think you have been able to demonstrate that in Kingston it is very much a greater Kingston community effort, taking in four different municipalities. It has been an excellent example of co-ordination. Not that we want to see it continue, but I think you made a very telling remark when you said that it has made a very lasting impression on the citizens of the Kingston area for real compassion to those people who are in need of the services provided by the bank.

Could you give us a quick profile on the use of the bank by people? What times of the month are the busiest? Is it always, as some have suggested, the fourth week of the month? Is it fairly consistent? I know you keep excellent records there. What about the frequency of return of the same people within the course of a year? Could we have a little more on that profile?

**Mrs Flanagan:** The last two weeks of the month generally are the busiest time of the month. That is when we do the most business. In a year, I would say the months of January and February, when the income tax refunds are due, is a time when our numbers go down, because many of our clients will go and cash in their income tax receipts. But on a monthly basis, it is generally the last two weeks of the month.

In terms of food bank usage, we have found that about 16 to 18 per cent of our clients are depending on the food bank on a regular monthly basis. Quite a large percentage, over 40 or 50 per cent, are using it one to three times in a 12-month period.

**Mr Allen:** Do you have a statistic that tells us what your year-over-year increase is in numbers and patronage?

**Mrs Flanagan:** I do not think I have it with me.

**The Chair:** Would you be able to send that in?

**Mrs Flanagan:** Yes, I could.

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**Mr Allen:** The reason I ask that question is that I think a number of food banks across the province are finding that the growth in the clientele is putting them in a very serious position vis-à-vis their capacity to ensure delivery, let alone the moral question of whether they should be there and whether government should be in their place. What are your reflections on the dilemma of, on the one hand, closing food banks in order to force government's hand to deal with the bulk of the hunger problem directly or, on the other hand, continuing with the constant strain of wondering whether you are going to be able to sufficiently meet the need yourselves?



**Mrs Flanagan:** Yes, I think there is no question that for many of us who are working in food banks the strain is becoming very strenuous and testing the limits of our own compassion. However, I do not think that saying point blank that we are going to close food banks is the answer. I think that perhaps putting together a strategic plan, as the food bank in Halifax is going to be doing in order to close in five years, putting together some kind of plan where you set a target date of five or 10 years to close your doors and then go about taking the necessary steps to do that, is the answer. But I do not think just coming right out and saying, "We're going to close and it's up to the government to do its bit," I do not think any of us who are working in direct service could see ourselves doing that.

**Mr Allen:** No, and I do not hear anybody proposing that.

**Mr Jackson:** You talk about grants on your revenue and expenditure page. What were the nature of those grants and from what sources?

**Mrs Flanagan:** Those would be government grants in the form of employment subsidies to hire people; for instance, in the government of Ontario, the employment opportunities grants program. We have taken advantage of two of those grants.

**Mr Jackson:** In your note, you show that it is down in 1989 and potentially in 1990. Are you no longer taking advantage of those grants?

**Mrs Flanagan:** The problem with those grants is that they are nonrenewable and you can use them for one year. So you are to hire someone for one year and then lay him off. In our mind, that does not seem very ethical, just to be churning people through our service as employees year in and year out. We value our employees and would like to keep them on, so we are looking for more sustaining funding than through the employment opportunities grants.

#### FOOD BANK OF WATERLOO REGION

**The Chair:** May I have Ms Fast from Waterloo, please.

**Ms Fast:** Good afternoon. I am Carolyn Fast from the Food Bank of Waterloo Region. My copresenter is Bev Jackson, co-ordinator of the Cambridge Community Food Co-op, which is a member agency of the food bank.

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak to you this afternoon and present a very brief and small picture of what is happening in my community. The Food Bank of Waterloo Region opened in January 1984 with a geographical mandate to work in the region of Waterloo. Initiatives to organize the food bank were the result of a mayor's committee on unemployment, formed in Kitchener-Waterloo, during the early 1980s recession to address the vastly increased numbers of unemployed and hungry people in our community.

The food bank was started by a collective of four direct-service agencies, our social planning council and with voluntary staffing provided by Mennonite Central Committee. The member agencies continue to have a high level of involvement with and ownership of the food bank. They sit on our board and they contribute to our operating budget.

Our mandate is to solicit, collect, store and distribute donated food products for emergency food relief. We have a mandate to raise public awareness in our community and we have a mandate to work with our national and provincial organizations in addressing issues such as you are doing at this committee.

I would say that we have no fear of closing our food bank in K-W. We are not at a point, as Suzanne mentioned, where we

would feel very good about that. I have had people from some local poverty groups say to me that they are terrified that we will close because they do not know what they will do to make ends meet. At this stage, we will work on those larger issues and maintain our emergency service until such time as it is appropriate for us to close.

In our first year of operation, in 1984, we served a total of six agencies and handled about 75,000 pounds of food, which is about \$150,000 worth. In 1989, we served 11 agencies with 24 food programs and handled over 635,000 pounds of food. That is about \$1.2 million worth. Our agencies served well over 400,000 meals in 1989, providing assistance to between 35,000 and 40,000 people. While our food bank's growth may be attributed to increased contacts with our abundant and generous supply of food producers in our community, with the generosity of the public and with increased efficiency in food use on the part of our member agencies, the increases simply cannot be explained away by these factors.

In 1990, we anticipate our agencies providing over 500,000 meals to those in need in our community. Dramatic growth in the use of some programs has left us wondering just how many more people will be served in 1990. It is very difficult to project.

For instance, case loads are up in Waterloo region. That was in our paper this week. The paper attributed it to welfare reforms, although I am sure that is not quite what it meant. Our local soup kitchen continues to see increases over 1989, now serving an average of 200 people a day—in 1989, it was closer to 180—with highs of 250 per day in the last week of each month.

Most telling is the emergency food hamper program used by our largest member agency and the largest food hamper provider in the region. In December, they provided 950 hampers, in January 1,307 and in February, the shortest month of the year, 1,354 food hampers. In 1989, they provided a total of 9,048 hampers which served approximately 24,000 people. If the numbers continue as they have started in 1990, the numbers of persons served could climb to 38,000-plus in food hampers alone.

We have also noticed a dramatic increase in the volume of food being used by smaller food hamper programs, church- or parish-based, and in our outlying rural communities where food use was up 30 per cent in 1989. While the split for use is generally about even between those on social assistance and the working poor or on no income, the rural areas are seeing up to 75 per cent of their cases being the working poor.

It is my sense, and that of many of those I spoke to in our community, that there will be little significant change resulting from the reforms announced in May 1989. In the region of Waterloo, we continue to see housing problems: very low vacancy rates combined with very high rents and shelter rates that do not cover what the market rent is.

Employment is an issue in our community. Our local labour council is expressing serious concerns about the employment situation in our community: layoffs and plant closings. For instance, Kitchener's Canada employment office has an average of generally 200 per week of unemployment insurance applications. The first week after Christmas, they served 2,000 people.

Contributing factors to unemployment in our community are: free trade, companies moving south; a general downsizing, the leaner, meaner approach that we hear about; a general trend towards low-paying, part-time, low-skilled jobs with no benefits. These profoundly affect economic stability, security and the ability to participate fully in our society.

The unemployment rate has risen to 6.7 per cent in January 1990 from less than five per cent a year ago.

We also have environmental concerns in our community that threaten jobs. Elmira is a classic example of that where 315 jobs are threatened because of the water situation.

We feel that there is a near neglect of the working poor in our province, that we are not addressing the issues related to them. There is also a lack of information about the reforms. Few agency workers I spoke to, let alone their clients, could spell out clearly and knowledgeably what the changes entail. Few clients saw much change in their cheques. In our community, 5.8 per cent is the cost of living increase and the increases were between five per cent and six per cent.

Finally, we are beginning to see a fallout of provincial-municipal wrangling over cost-sharing for local services. Our local soup kitchen is affected by emergency shelter and assistance program funding removals and there was a general sense from our municipal social services department that our services and that of our soup kitchen would no longer be required once the reforms were in place. When the agency went to the region for funding assistance to replace the more than 25 per cent of ESAP funds it lost, staff recommended no grant, I believe in an effort to force the province into responsibility for cost-sharing. They were concerned about precedent-setting transfers to municipal budgets, which I share.

Politicians decided not to adhere to staff recommendations increasing their base grant over 1989 and leaving a \$40,000 shortfall. This was a political decision to be sure, but it was also a commitment on the part of our local politicians to the needs of our community. But a revealing comment by one of our local councillors reveals how entrenched the charitable food network is in our community and the provincial community at large. This was quoted in the Kitchener-Waterloo Record on 1 March: "We're talking about a final kind of safety net where you land before crashing on the pavement. This is clearly an area where the province has made a mistake."

**Ms B. Jackson:** In Cambridge, in January 1990, we have seen a 60 per cent increase in the number of families that we have provided food for. That is a 60 per cent increase over 1989. Of the many families that I have talked with in the last month, some have received increases of no more than \$30. This is a single mother on family benefits with three children. She is already \$500 below the poverty line and \$30 is not making a lot of difference to her family. She asked me if I knew when the increases were going to be happening. She had heard through the media that there would be increases to her to live on for the next year. I had to tell that \$30 was her increase, that was it for the year. She does not know what she is going to do.

Of the families we serve food to, 52 per cent are on social assistance, 20 per cent are working poor, 14 per cent are on unemployment insurance or receive no benefits or no income at all and the remaining 13 per cent are on some type of disability. The families on family benefits are ahead of the working poor because they receive even less money in a month.

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**Ms Fast:** Bev and I have some general recommendations for you. We would just reiterate most of what you have heard today already.

One is that we would recommend that changes have occurred be effectively communicated and that staff be instructed to be able to do that with their clients.

The province should take ownership of the basic needs and rights of its citizens.

While we applaud the steps that have been made, and we think there have been some good steps made with the beginning im-

plementation of SARC, we ask that you return to the spirit and the letter of the SARC report, that the money and the creative energy invested in this report be put to good use for the needy citizens of our province.

In closing, I just want to quote a paragraph from the Transitions report:

"All people in Ontario are entitled to an equal assurance of life opportunities in a society that is based on fairness, shared responsibility, and personal dignity for all. The objective for social assistance must be to ensure that individuals are able to make the transition from dependence to autonomy and from exclusion on the margins of society to integration within the mainstream of community life."

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** I guess what I find most stunning about your presentation is that, in contrast to Gerard Kennedy's presentation this morning where they have noticed a bit of a drop in their numbers, a five per cent drop approximately, which they attributed to the new changes, you are talking about a 60 per cent increase in January.

There are two sides of it. I have heard the account that you give for it, but what do you precisely put that down to, if you have something, because most of your big layoffs have been quite recent and those people should still be on UI, one would presume, at this stage. It scares the dickens out of me when I see the levels that are still being fed out there when it looks like we are moving into a recession now. What do you see ahead, I guess, is my second half of it.

**Ms Fast:** Just from my perspective, from what I have heard, I would say the employment situation is a critical part of it. The other critical part is housing. We are facing some really serious housing situations in Waterloo region, for a variety of reasons. The costs are extremely high. As you heard earlier today, that takes a tremendous bite out of the kind of money or disposable income that people have. I would say that is one of the biggest things.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** In our case, though, here in Toronto, that has been happening fairly consistently. Therefore, we have seen the numbers going up fairly consistently since about 1983, I guess. But in your case this is still the same kind of leap we were seeing in 1984, 1985 and 1986 here, what we are seeing in your case now. It is not as though you are new. You have been around since 1984.

**Ms Fast:** I think some of those things we cannot answer for a while yet. I am not sure why the numbers are going up. We have only been into the reform stage for three to eight weeks. I think we have to look at those kinds of questions, and we are not there yet in terms of answers.

**Mr Jackson:** I too am shocked by the 60 per cent increase. Do you have a handle on the number of working families, that ratio? Could you refresh my memory on that point and, second, the number of university or community college students who are not living at home who are accessing your program? Can you break down your statistics? I am trying to see if there is a correlation in campus communities.

**Ms Fast:** I would say that the number of students involved is minimal. I do not think that is something you would see except rarely, from what I understand from our member agencies. As for the working families, I do not have those numbers with me today. I could get them for you if you would like.



**Mr Jackson:** In that 60 per cent increase, have you been able to determine a certain target group that is expanding at greater rates than other needs groups?

**Ms B. Jackson:** I would have to say that would be the families of the working poor. Of the total population that receives food from us, 20 per cent were working poor, and that is ever growing. Three or four years ago, we had a very small percentage who were working poor, the percentage of families.

**Ms Fast:** In general, I would say that is shifting. It used to be 50-50 and I think the percentage is going up on the side of the working poor.

**The Chair:** Thank you both very much, Ms Fast and Ms Jackson.

### BELLEVILLE GLEANERS FOOD BANK

**The Chair:** May I have the presenters from Belleville, please, Mrs Doef and Mr Daradick.

**Mrs Doef:** I am Anne Doef from the Belleville Gleaners Food Bank and with me is Paul Daradick, a recipient of my agency.

**The Chair:** All right. You have 15 minutes, and if you would like to give us some time for questioning, we would appreciate that.

**Mrs Doef:** I will first give my story on what we are actually doing in our food bank, and I hope to be as practical and as plain as I can be. I am not going that much by statistics but by facts that actually have taken place within my food bank. Paul has a short story, about five minutes, on why he is in the situation he is in.

The Belleville Gleaners Food Bank is located in St Michael's Church. We have a population of about 37,000, with several smaller communities around—you see a map in front of you—with a total of about 50,000 people. We are helping, on the average, between 40 and 50 families a week.

I have a direct-service operation. This means that everyone I help is directly dealing with me. The social worker or clergy or other agencies in our community refer the recipient to me. If I do not get enough information on the person, I interview him myself. I am partly involved in the difficulties in the confidentiality that is given to me. I give out about a week's supply of food, and that is made up by the volunteers. The recipient has no choice and no right to ask what the choice of food is. It is simply given to them, what we think is right for them. But we feel that, in a way, the choices are taken away from them.

We exist because of high rents. The main factor is the social decreases that have taken place in the standard of living. We feel that every Canadian has a right to food, clothing and shelter. These are the three basic needs. If one of those items is suffering—the shelter is the highest, and then because of clothes and food, we are squeezing the other items. That is why people have to come to food banks.

That is the way we came into existence and, out of our Christian love for human beings, we are serving those who have a very difficult time, sometimes without their own control. What are these difficulties? I would like to address to you why they are coming to food banks.

I have seen a difficulty basically in the period of waiting for unemployment insurance. People are telling me they are waiting between four to six weeks before they are finally getting their way of getting money out of UI. They are stuck in the computer and sometimes they have to wait two weeks before their name is finally printed out. What do you do in the meantime? You have to go to a food bank in order to survive. People have paid into the

system for many, many years and what kind of service do they get out of it? Next to nothing.

We have people who are on local welfare. Before the assessment has taken place, they come and they have to wait between a week and two weeks before they finally get anything from social welfare at all.

Then the headlines in our paper said that \$2 million is saved on social welfare in Hastings county. These are the frustrations people have to go through. Also, if you are on general welfare and you are asking for a disability pension, it takes years to finally qualify for it. In the meantime, people are waiting.

Mother's allowance is a little bit better, but again, because of the high rents, they still have to ask for assistance from a food bank. People do not want to come to a food bank, but there is no other way. They are squeezed into a corner. We are driving people on to the street because there is no other way out.

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These are the main difficulties, and that is why I would like to address that to you.

I myself have taken a keen interest in the social being of people. I feel it is a very shallow way of giving, only food, and that is why I have been able to counsel them and see where I can improve their lifestyle. When a family becomes dependent on the food bank for between four to six months, I ask them what their problems are and I find many are related problems that are solvable if they are distributed into other agencies. I have to help them by saying: "Have you filled in the forms for affordable housing? Did you do something? Did you write a letter to your member of Parliament? Did you go after—" If there is a problem within the homes, maybe the children need assistance in some way; there are mental health and other agencies that can help out.

This way my numbers have decreased, and it might be a revealing story for you to also look at that and ask, "Can we only feed people?" No, we cannot. We have to look at them as a total human being whom we are interested in. Giving food, again, is a very shallow way of helping. It fills your stomach for a few minutes and you feel good for a while, but the problem is there. So that is why we have addressed them and that is why I am having a success story. I would like to share that with you today to point that out.

In January 1989, we gave 213 food baskets. This January, 1990, I gave 177. I am decreasing. In February 1989 I gave 202 hampers out; in 1990, just this past month, 158. It is working. It is helping those people by saying I am not seeing you as, "Here's some food and there you go." I have taken the responsibility of saying, "I really care for you as a person and let me know what I can do," but it takes a tremendous amount of effort and work and sometimes we get very, very tired.

This is what I would like to get across. I can come out with a lot of statistics and a lot of saying, "Well, where can we go?" I think if the government shapes up with UI and does not make people wait for weeks on end and does its part, then I can do my part and we will see the numbers maybe decreasing.

But, again, I would like you to listen to Paul's story. Paul came in in November. He has gone through quite a bit.

**The Chair:** Mrs Doef, before we get into Paul's story—

**Mrs Doef:** I would like you to listen from the practical point—

**The Chair:** Please. I would like to do that, but would you tell us if you are the only person who does this more holistic approach, or do you have a lot of people in your group?

**Mrs Doef:** I have volunteers who basically help me with packaging the food and that is the only thing. I am the only one who looks after the total person. I find that I often ask the social worker's permission if I am able to do this. I have three women who also go into the homes who help them with budget planning, who help them with cooking up recipes, who see how they can establish a solid base within the home and where they can help out. This has been very effective.

**The Chair:** So you and three others are doing this?

**Mrs Doef:** That is right.

**The Chair:** Would you like to give us your story, Paul?

**Mr Daradick:** I want to title my presentation here to the committee. I title it "Mediocrity." I came here today to tell all who have ears to hear why I ended up at a food bank.

If there is anybody at this meeting who knows about poverty, I do. I was born in 1932 in Regina, Saskatchewan, where Depression hit the hardest anywhere in Canada. I never owned a pair of shoes till I was six years old and going to school. I wore Indian moccasins that my father received as a gift from the Cree Indians who lived behind our farm.

My dad lost everything he broke his back for after immigrating from Hungary in 1923. We could not qualify for relief because the parish priest said he did not have the authority to sign the document that would have made us eligible. Consequently, my father and three brothers grabbed the freight trains and they rode east for the sugar beet and tobacco harvest. When the harvest was over, they rode the rods back so they could give my mother all the money so we could last through the winter.

My mother was paranoid about those freight train trips, as my brother Les fell in between the boxcars and the train ran over his feet. Everybody had to jump off the boxcar that time. They took my brother back to the farm and my mother stopped the bleeding and saved his foot. They wanted to amputate. His toes are all healed together.

The next summer, my dad and two brothers went east on the freight and left my brother home. They sent my mother enough money for the whole family to come east. We had relatives in Welland and Hamilton. We moved to Welland first and then to Hamilton. Two of my brothers joined the army and the other two and my father went to work at Dominion Foundries and Steel, which is called Dofasco now. My mother cleaned offices and worked on the farms. She took in boarders.

I was six years old when I came to Hamilton. I sold the Globe and Mail outside by Dofasco for a penny a copy. I went to school after eating breakfast. After school I had a Spectator route, delivering the papers. After I delivered the papers I went home and had supper and I charged to the bowling alley so I could get there first to spot pins for a penny and a half a line. I did this day in and day out and gave all the money to my mother. I did this until I went to high school, and then I drove a tractor on a farm.

I had to quit high school in grade 10 because my father contracted silicosis of the lungs on his job. He was a core maker moulder. He was given the gate; they told him he was finished. I had to get a work permit to go to work because I was not 16. I became the breadwinner for my mother and my two sisters. I worked various jobs and met my wife playing hockey while in Welland. I married at 19. We had four children.

I managed to start a construction business in 1964 and stayed in business until 1980. In 1980 I was felled with spinal meningitis. During this period, I lost my health, my wife and my wealth. The road was long and hard to recover my health. I had to learn how to walk all over again. My life became no bed of roses.

In 1985 I was involved in a motor vehicle accident and I was left paralysed on my right side. I still have irreparable nerve damage there. I went on a permanent disability pension, after waiting two and a half years to get on it. I moved in with my mother, and when I moved in, she contracted strokes. She passed away in 1987.

She left a will that I had to share with my five brothers. I had to buy them all out to own the house. After I retained title to the house, I lived in it for two years and found out I could not keep it on what I was getting, so I sold it. I consequently ended up in Belleville to be near three of my four children.

I receive \$818 Canada pension and disability. After I pay my mortgage, \$541, hydro, \$70, heat, \$70, telephone, \$15, I am left with \$119 for a month. That is roughly \$30 a week, I do not smoke, I do not drink, I do not socialize, nor do I entertain. I do not own a vehicle. I walk to and from my doctors and walk to the hospital the day before my operations and the day after. I cannot live any more frugally, other than starving myself into submission. I have not paid my 1989 taxes yet, and I do not know how, I have not got a clue how I am going to do that.

I am a survivor, and with the help of my God I am going to make it somehow. I managed to survive the last Depression, and I am hoping to survive the next one.

Somebody must start paying attention to the poor. Never mind all these commissions. I have heard commissions since Trudeau and Pearson and nothing has been done. The homeless just still have not got homes; the hungry are still hungry. What a situation to give our kids who are coming up today, because most of these people who are on welfare, statistics say that their children will be on welfare. This is a real disgrace for Canada. We are one of the richest countries in the world.

Respectfully yours, thank you.

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**The Chair:** Thank you very much Mr Daradick. Have you any questions, Mr Allen?

**Mr Allen:** Yes, I have one. First of all, let me say I was very impressed by the statement. It was very personal, but it tells it the way it is.

But I wanted to ask about your estimate of the overall impact of the kind of approach that you take, which you describe for us as a holistic approach, because I think we are all quite aware that there is a certain percentage of the clientele of food banks who may well have problems in managing their lives in a broad sense. In particular, they may have troubles with such things as budgeting. At the same time, it is not the whole case load, and I think perhaps you might agree with that.

I was discussing that question with my Hamilton people last Tuesday, and one of them said: "We could get rid of 50 to 60 per cent of our case load, purely and simply if the ministry would provide adequacy of benefits and an adequate minimum wage. They can handle their lives." Another one said, "The problem isn't that people can't budget, they don't have enough to budget with." But they also did say, "Well, there is a kind of residual core there that does need these additional supports, and that's the thing that we feel we can best offer as an agency, but we're prevented from doing it because we have to spend so much time on the other question of just simply feeding hungry people who otherwise could look after their lives."

What percentage, do you think, of your case load falls in those various groups of being unable to function, needing that kind of support system, the others who could make it if they just simply had the wherewithal?



**Mrs Doef:** I feel that half of the recipients who use the food bank need other assistance on how to budget, how to find a lifestyle that they can handle and they need support from other agencies in how to do it. I find a real need is to start in the schools and teach kids the life skills that they so need.

I have a poverty game that I teach them in grade 12 and 13 what it is like to live on social assistance. It was an eye-opener to me to really see what was taken away. Instead of like in a Monopoly game you make money, it was taken away all the time from you and you never gain one or two steps ahead.

That makes frustrations, and then you cause tension within the family, and what do you get? Problems. They either start drinking or they start going to bingo halls, getting their hopes in lottery tickets; they start doing things in a lot of areas where they should not spend their money. I think that is why we are having a lot of problems and I am glad I could address them to you. Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much for your unique approach today.

#### CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO INC

**The Chair:** May I have the representatives of the Co-operative Housing Association of Ontario, Mr Morris and Mr Reagan?

**Mr Reagan:** I am Dale Reagan. Yes, I am going to start off this morning and then Bill will make some comments.

Some brief introductory comments on the organization that we represent: We are from the Co-operative Housing Association of Ontario, which represents the nonprofit co-op sector in the province, and we are a housing advocacy organization that works closely with other groups, such as the Affordable Housing Action Group and the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association, to try to develop solutions to Ontario's housing problems.

CHAO itself is a democratically controlled organization. Our members are the federations that serve the needs of existing housing co-ops, the resource groups that develop nonprofit housing co-ops, and we also have one staff association of employees who work in housing co-ops as our members.

There are at the moment around 350 housing co-ops either occupied or being built in Ontario, and that means that we are providing housing for around 23,000 households. I think most of the members of this committee are familiar with nonprofit housing co-ops, so I will just say just a very brief word on that.

Housing co-ops are nonprofit corporations owned and controlled by the resident members on a one member, one vote basis. Co-ops provide permanent, affordable housing for low- and moderate-income households. Some of the units in the co-op are occupied by people who have paid the full market charge and some by people who require rent-geared-to-income assistance. The actual mix between those two parts varies depending on the program, but for the projects developed under the Ontario programs, it is average that 62 per cent of the units are occupied by people paying on a rent-geared-to-income basis.

We welcome the opportunity to speak to the committee today, and I just wanted to open by stating that we are not going to be commenting on the wide range of issues that are of concern to this committee but are going to focus our comments very specifically on the relationship between the lack of affordable housing and the growing reliance on food banks. Clearly, we feel that there is a very direct link between these two matters. Low- and moderate-income households increasingly are forced to make the difficult choice between providing themselves with shelter and feeding themselves adequately. Studies done by Toronto's Daily Bread

Food Bank, which I am sure you are aware is the largest food bank in the province, show that between 60 and 66 per cent of the income of users is spent on shelter, which means that food, clothing and transportation have to be squeezed out of the little that remains.

During the 1980s, and most dramatically in the second half of the decade, of course, housing cost skyrocketed, and that provided some benefits for the people who were fortunate enough to be in the position to afford home ownership and their equity increased, but for people who were in the rental market, they found that the cost of housing increased much more dramatically than their incomes. Again, looking at statistics from the Daily Bread Food Bank, we saw that from 1987 to 1989 the incomes of these people increased by about 18 per cent whereas the cost of housing increased by 36 per cent, twice as much. I think that is a fairly dramatic illustration of the problem that people are faced with when they have to make those kinds of choices.

I do not want to go through a full recital of the kinds of statistics that I am sure you are familiar with about the level of housing needs in the province. We have highlighted a few of those in our report, including the comments in the 1987 Ministry of Housing's advisory committee on the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, which dramatically pointed out that at that time some 200,000 households were caught in the cycle of homelessness in the province.

We want to stress that, far from being a Toronto-only problem, the problem of lack of affordable housing is a province-wide problem. Across Canada at the moment, the average vacancy rate is two and a half per cent, whereas in eight of the 10 largest municipalities in Ontario the vacancy rate is under one per cent. Sudbury now shares with Toronto the distinction of having the lowest vacancy rate in the country.

To put this into its full context, I think we have to look at the fact that in spite of unprecedented demand, what we are faced with over the next couple of years is the forecast that housing starts are going to actually decline by 10 per cent in each of the next two years.

The question of the relationship between affordable housing and the reliance on food banks is clearly there and the need to address the problem by finding solutions, affordable housing solutions, clearly exists. However, I think we all acknowledge that there are very formidable barriers to be overcome if we are to do this.

Put quite simply, the chief of these is the fact that for between 40 and 60 per cent of the province's population, the private market simply is not working at the moment. For this large segment of the population, what this means is that they cannot afford mortgage payments or they cannot afford the actual cost of providing rental housing. We have provided some statistical backup for some of these comments that the committee may find useful.

I think it is important for us to recognize and for the government to begin to recognize that this is not a short-term problem that is going to be turned around by the marketplace in time. The problem has been with us for decades, and although it is not widely recognized, the government has in fact played a massive role over these years in providing housing through tax expenditures and direct subsidies. Billions of dollars of public money have been pumped into the housing market. This has been designed in part to provide general economic stimulation, but more specifically was meant to provide access to home ownership for an increased number of people and to stimulate private rental production.

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The problem with these programs, we want to stress, is that the market pressure quickly results in the housing that was initially affordable becoming unaffordable, even though that housing was provided with government assistance. We are left with the situation where access to that housing is available only to people who can afford the full market cost.

A further problem is that such private rental and home ownership programs are very poorly targeted. We find that typically they have created housing accessible mainly to middle-income households and the tax benefits that are available have flowed for the most part to upper-income earners.

**Mr Morris:** If I can continue, the question, we would suggest, is not in fact whether or not government is going to spend money on housing. That has been a reality for quite some time. The question is rather where we spend the money and at what level we spend the money. We would argue that the investment—and it is an investment—in nonprofit housing is in fact the only place that government should spend money within the housing market.

We make that argument because nonprofit housing is sheltered from the ravages of inflation that market housing is subject to. The housing that is created within the nonprofit community comes on stream and becomes a community asset which remains accessible to people of low and modest incomes. One of the problems we have had in the past has been that the housing that we have produced, largely left in the market, comes on stream at possibly an attractive rate but then quickly escalates, thereby limiting the access of future users. As well, nonprofit housing serves the full range of incomes within that grouping that is currently left out of the housing market.

We would like to stress that, to date, there have been government initiatives in the area of nonprofit housing. The difficulty has been that the amount of resources that have been allocated are really quite small compared to the problem. We have made the mistake far too often of assuming that the problem we are looking at is in fact short-term in nature. It is not. I am afraid we have looked at it as a problem of a market that requires simply a little time to correct itself. It is not. That is why we would suggest again, strenuously, that the best place that government can spend its money is on nonprofit solutions.

Today's nonprofit housing: I think one of the difficulties that many of our providers have is that when we go out into the community, we run up against a great deal of neighbourhood resistance and we have to fight some of the phantoms of the past.

Today's nonprofit housing really grew out of a reaction against the large-scale public housing projects of the 1950s and 1960s. Those projects primarily address the shelter needs without adequately addressing the community and social needs that go along with some of the difficulties that people who find themselves priced out of the market experience. Over the last 20 years, community-based nonprofit housing has started to replace the private rental sector. We have produced some 100,000 units of housing in this province over the last 20 years, the majority of which have been produced in the last 10 years.

Again, we stress that these are a long-term solution, not a short-term solution, but the difficulty we have as producers is that government continues to view what we do as short-term in its nature. I will just illustrate quickly why that is a problem.

The development of housing is a long process, usually taking three to four years. However, programs come on stream almost immediately and the nonprofit sector is expected to produce almost immediately. In the 1988-89 budget, Homes Now, the 30,000-unit program of nonprofit housing, was announced by the

province. The difficulty has been that we were not in a position to immediately take advantage of that because our funding is always precarious. Programs come, programs go. The development pipeline is a rather long one, one in which the process of development can take three to four years.

The position we find ourselves currently in is that the Homes Now program has been completely spoken for. Providers are out there looking for opportunities, because the need still exists, but there are not any units for us to look towards in order to provide those future developments. If we are not seeing a new program follow Homes Now, there is going to be a serious gap that develops in that pipeline. We are now actually in the position of being in that gap-creating period.

We would like to stress that the nonprofit sector is innovative. We have come up with many suggestions as to how to produce housing more cheaply. Producing housing is not a cheap thing to do, it is expensive, but we would suggest there are a great deal of benefits associated with that production and to not address the housing needs of Ontarians adequately, I am afraid, is not a solution either. We pay a huge cost, as you are witnessing here today, both socially and directly in a financial sense, by not addressing the housing needs of Ontarians. Thank you.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** These things are so depressing when you look at them with a long view. I ran off to get a report we did back in 1987 to check out some of the statistics, and I must say the vacancy rates and the affordability ratios all seem to be staying fairly much in the same kind of range these days.

One of the things that I had remembered, because you pointed it out, is that the budget figure is now 1.3 per cent of the overall budget going to housing. In our report that we did in 1986 it was 1.09 per cent, and at that point it was the lowest of all the provinces in the country except for a couple of the Atlantic provinces, as I recall.

You did not put anything down here about how we now rank nationally. Has that moving to 1.3 per cent, rather than to the three per cent plus that you are talking about moving to, moved this up substantially with our provinces across the country? Do you know offhand?

**Mr Reagan:** I am not sure where we rank in relation to the other provinces specifically, but one of the comments that we have thrown back at us is that the dramatic increase in spending on Homes Now is going to just push the housing budget way up. Our projections are that, even when the costs of the Homes Now program are fully mature, we will still only be at under two per cent of the total provincial spending.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** As you say, and I think I agree with you, misdirected in terms of the emphasis that we need right at the moment in terms of creating more homes.

**Mr McGuinty:** You refer to some innovative changes. When I think of co-operative housing and my own experience, after the war, when there was a terrible shortage of housing, a group got together and, through the help of Central Mortgage and Housing, bought the land and physically built our own houses—physically—after work each evening, working for five to six hours, and on weekends. Is that kind of thing under way or is it possible?

Second, is it possible to have a house constructed partially; in other words, have a house constructed with the ground floor completed, or even just roughed in, and allow the individual to complete the finishing work himself or herself, or perhaps have the ground floor finished and then, when later uses or extended uses develop, finish the upstairs? Or is it possible to have a house



built on land leased, maybe for 99 years? Are these things innovations, or is this type of thing feasible or possible at present?

**Mr Morris:** I think the first two examples are in fact interesting in terms of that is where we see our history. Actually, we spring from the co-operative building movement.

**Mr McGuinty:** I recall that very well.

**Mr Morris:** The difficulty, of course, in replicating something like that today is immense. Beyond building codes and occupancy permits and all those kinds of things that we have to deal with, I do not know that there is a great deal of room for involvement of individuals in the actual construction side of housing, particularly when we deal with the densities that we do in order to meet the maximum unit prices that are imposed upon us in terms of what we can produce.

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However, the latter statement I in fact include in here as one of the examples, and it has been one that we have been pressing the government hard on. We had fought for a long time for a housing first policy on government lands, particularly so that we could do that kind of thing. If we can remove the land component from the cost of the housing, it means that what we can do is produce a great deal more housing with the same number of dollars. So we are completely open to that idea and are in fact in pursuing that.

**Mr McGuinty:** I can appreciate the difficulty. We built on acre lots in outlying areas before this dog's breakfast, can of worms municipal interference scheme developed. I really appreciate the difficulty that what was appropriate then is really not feasible now.

**Mr Neumann:** What impact has the recent federal budget had on the prospect for more co-op housing in communities across Ontario?

**Mr Reagan:** We were certainly very pleased to see that the federal budget did not cut the unilateral federal program, the index-linked mortgage program which provides co-operative housing across the country. That was spared. But we were very distressed to find that the transfer payments that are involved in the cost-shared federal-provincial program were cut by 15 per cent.

We are still sorting through. I do not think anyone has a clear answer yet on how much of that is going to be translated directly into cuts in the federal-provincial program, but we do know that it is a program that has a budget cap on it and that in each of the last couple of years, and projecting this forward, with this extra 15 per cent cut, we are going to have dramatic cutbacks in the cost-shared program, which points even more emphatically to the need for the province to step in and provide the kind of programs that it showed leadership on when it provided the Homes Now program.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr Reagan and Mr Morris.

#### EMERGENCY FOOD AND CLOTHING CENTRE, OTTAWA

#### EMERGENCY SERVICE PROVIDERS OF OTTAWA

**The Chair:** May I have the representatives for the emergency food and shelter program from Ottawa, please? Ms Arnold and Sandy Scott, I would like to personally welcome you, since you do come from my part of the province.

**Mr Scott:** It is good to be here.

**Ms Arnold:** We will try to be brief, although I think we spend too much time close to the federal government and it is not one of the traits people from Ottawa are noted for, but we will do our best.

**The Chair:** You will try to accommodate within the 15 minutes, I hope. Please begin.

**Ms Arnold:** In addition to our presentation on behalf of the Emergency Food and Clothing Centre, Ottawa, we bring the standing committee written submissions from the following Ottawa groups: the clients and volunteers of the emergency centre and Centre 507; the regional municipality of Ottawa-Carleton's social services committee; the Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton; the Ottawa Food Bank; the Co-ordinating Committee of Emergency Service Providers of Ottawa-Carleton; the Association of Community Health, Resource and Service Centre Boards of Ottawa-Carleton; the Centretown Churches Social Action Committee; and Centre 507.

The message from Ottawa is clear and unified. Despite modified stage 1 implementation of Social Assistance Review Committee reforms, we are not yet close to making the transition to adequate income security. The "general prosperity" set out in your terms of reference simply does not exist for those still trapped 40 to 65 per cent below the National Welfare Council's 1990 poverty cutoff figures. Our reality is that there has been no decrease in need for emergency food assistance as we meet today, just 26 days before the termination of funding through the emergency shelter and assistance program.

Ottawa's second message is this: Let us work together as government and voluntary agencies to ensure access to emergency food assistance until adequacy has been assured for all residents of Ontario. I think there needs to be no doubt, however, that government, not the voluntary sector, is ultimately responsible for guaranteeing that adequacy.

Our presentation today is grounded in our experience as front-line workers in one of Ottawa-Carleton's largest grocery distribution programs. Our centre is located at McLeod-Stewarton United Church on Bank Street in centretown. It opened in 1978. Over the past decade, our numbers have increased 2,500 per cent. During 1989, we distributed enough two-day bags of groceries to feed 20,304 people. Our program has one temporary staff person and 100 volunteers. Our budget is 80 per cent church and community based.

We operate in partnership with Centre 507, a drop-in day program. In addition to food, together we provide crisis intervention, counselling, advocacy, an in-house employment program for clients, the weekly onsite resources of a home management counsellor and nurse practitioner and access to a personal support worker. We are committed to a client-centred approach and have worked hard together on education and response to SARC reforms. Our daily dialogue with clients and the tracking of their increases tell us that they still need to use food programs. Food for up to 100 people per day is still our reality.

Across Ottawa-Carleton, our experience is repeated by the 90 grocery programs, soup kitchens, shelters and day programs assisted by the food bank. In the words of Ron Melchers, president of the Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton:

"In 1987 we published a report...the Issue is Poverty...which documented the use of emergency services in the region. Survey results indicated a total of 45,974 requests for emergency services during a one-month period with a daily average of 1,483 requests. The numbers are startling and appalling. I believe they speak for themselves."

I might add that they have not changed much, from what we have seen in the early months of 1990. The food bank reports 20 new requests for food program support since January 1990 and provides these figures from the *Shepherds of Good Hope*:

"In 1989, 78,064 lunches were served in our soup kitchen. Our grocery program saw a 22.5 per cent increase in demand for grocery help in 1989. To meet the need, volunteers packed 14,159 hampers. In the first six months of 1989, there were 5,465 different people using our grocery program. That represents 1,988 different children under the age of 18—36.4 per cent of the total."

I would like to share with you some comments from clients and volunteers at the emergency centre and Centre 507. They come in response to the Ottawa SARC Monitoring Forum's invitation to write valentines to the government of Ontario. The inscription reads:

"Come on Mr Peterson—have a heart. We still need food and shelter. Work with us to end hunger and homelessness. Don't end our services until the need is gone."

Here are some of the responses:

"My name is Jerry. I am off the streets now, but I know how important a food program is. What is happening to humanity in this situation? Try surviving on welfare for a couple of months; maybe you'll find the importance of food."

"I am writing this for François because he cannot read or write. Please don't close our dropin. I am used to coming here and I need the food bank because my welfare cheque isn't enough."

"Times are changing. Please bear in mind there really was a French Revolution."

"If you are looking for solutions to the concerns of the poor, slow starvation is not the answer."

"God never left his little birds without food! Poor people need food programs desperately."

"Someone once said, 'Walk a mile in my shoes.' I would like to be able to buy shoes!"

I can add nothing to that kind of eloquence.

It is from this background of emergency service provision in Ottawa that we now reply to the standing committee's terms of reference.

## 1550

**Mr Scott:** I want to assure you all that poverty is alive and well in Ottawa-Carleton. Three levels of government in Ottawa may be able to hide it and spread it out through the region better than in Toronto or Vancouver or Edmonton, but poverty is alive and well. The welfare department estimates that this year alone its case load will increase by 10 per cent. As well, the Ottawa food bank each month hands out enough food to feed 15,000 people in our region.

When we read the terms of reference for this committee, we were disturbed by the inference that this general prosperity was being enjoyed. We were hoping that you did not mean it was being enjoyed by everyone in Ontario, because it is not. After the recession of the early 1980s, joblessness remained high. Many of the new jobs were in the low-paying service sector. Young people were excluded from the better jobs and many older workers found their skills obsolete in the technological age. Disabled persons and other minorities who have traditionally suffered discrimination in the labour market were further excluded from opportunity. For the most vulnerable groups—young families, children, female single parents—poverty was more prevalent at the end of the decade than at the beginning.

We do face a crisis. If you turn over to next page of my presentation, you will see that the minister, in his 13 July 1989 letter to us describing the end of the ESAP funding, based the

decision on two assumptions. The first assumption was that the higher shelter allowances and the children's benefits would help many recipients meet their shelter costs and their food costs. The second assumption was that the supports to employment program, or what has been called STEP, is going to raise the level of people's incomes to such a level that they will not need food centres. There will not be working poor people any more, in other words. Both of those assumptions are wrong.

While we support and are pleased with the intent of these changes, the May 1989 reform package is only the first step in many more changes that need to take place. Our experience tells us that these changes have not substantially changed the situation of those on assistance. Many people on assistance in Ontario live far below the national poverty line. Until assistance rates are brought up to a level that will allow financial independence, there will be a need for emergency food programs and government support for these programs.

Most, if not all, the food programs in Ottawa are committed to closing their doors when they know there is no need for their services. If the provincial government is committed to helping individuals live independently, then it should work with us. Work with emergency programs towards that end. Do not cripple us. Do not remove our funding.

I have also outlined those who benefit the most from the SARC reforms. On page 3, there are four examples. These are people who benefit the most. I did not make these up. The documentation for their cheques is included in the package.

The first example is a family of five. They receive on general welfare \$1,065 per month. Their annual income is \$12,780. The 1990 poverty line for a family of five is \$30,513. These people are 58 per cent below the poverty line after the reforms. This is the best.

The single mother with one child living in public housing receives \$765. Her annual income is \$9,180. She is 52 per cent below the poverty line.

I would like to take you down quickly to example 4, because this is a mother who is on STEP. I have worked with two different people since the introduction of STEP, trying to get them through this system. Ottawa-Carleton's welfare system is one of the best in Ontario, and it is difficult to figure out what is going on with STEP.

Anyway, this woman finally decided to work 20 hours a week at \$6.75 an hour, so after the deductions, after the \$350 child care and other startup deductions, she makes \$270.76. So she qualifies for a cheque of \$619. In spite of that STEP program, she is still 44.4 per cent below the poverty line. Granted, if she was on FBA she would be 54 per cent below, so with STEP she is 10 per cent better off, but she is still working poor.

The people who gain the least from the SARC reforms are single people. They gain the least because their maximum shelter allowance is only \$350, and in 1989 the average cost of a bachelor apartment in Ottawa was \$390 and it was \$489 for a one-bedroom apartment.

The single man, example 5, who lives in private accommodation receives \$567 per month on general welfare. His total annual income is \$6,804. The poverty line is \$14,078. He is 52 per cent below the poverty line, and I would like you to note that most people in the area in which we live pay at least \$400 a month for rent.

There are two other examples there that I show you, and I invite you to look in the back of the package. There are cheque stubs. There is the proof of income earnings. We are not making these things up. Behind these pieces of paper are real people. These are real people's lives that we are talking about here.



What needs to be done:

1. Welfare incomes still fall short of the poverty line and incomes to maintain an adequate standard of living need to be raised. Further increases in welfare rates need to take place.

2. The shelter allowance needs to be increased to reflect local housing costs, especially in the urban centres. Special attention needs to be paid to the housing needs of singles.

3. We need assurances that the province will index welfare allowances to ensure that the progress made will not erode over time.

4. The working poor in our community need to become aware of these changes, which may result in many becoming eligible for financial assistance.

This is one of the things that we do the most down at our program. The welfare workers barely know what the changes mean themselves. Sometimes I explain to the welfare workers what the changes mean. We are ending up telling people what they have a right to.

5. The minimum wage needs to be increased substantially to help address the problems of the working poor.

6. The provincial government should make a long-term commitment to the implementation of the complete SARC package of reforms. We do not know if you have made a long-term commitment and would appreciate knowing if you have or not.

7. There should be a long-term commitment to dialogue between local government officials—the welfare and FBA people—elected representatives—yourselves—and private groups working with those in need—us. We need to act together as partners and develop alternatives that will help people become and remain independent.

We have had a hard time meeting with our local elected representatives. We have sent a few letters to the Ottawa Liberal caucus, and we wanted to meet with them. We appreciate being invited here today, but we certainly would enjoy meeting our local elected representatives. We think that there needs to be some accountability. Our stories need to be told, and the only way we can do that is by meeting with you.

8. Government and private agencies must recognize that the issue of poverty is deep and complex. A commitment needs to be made, not only to address the need of income adequacy; other issues such as health, addictions, quality of life and community, education and self-esteem must be addressed. We can help you with those. That is where we come in.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

**Mr McGuinty:** I am curious regarding your attempts, as yet ineffectual, to meet with the Ottawa-Carleton caucus. Have you applied for such a meeting?

**Mr Scott:** Not ineffectual, it is just that we have not got any response. I have written two letters to Mr Chiarelli, one on 8 January and one on 19 February, requesting a meeting. We have not received any written response to those letters, and I have phoned twice. I have had to phone Mr Chiarelli and I have talked to someone at a regional desk. They have been very unclear about it.

**The Chair:** Mr Scott, if I may help clarify, I think the decision that was made at our caucus was that it would be more advantageous for you to present to a larger group. If that message has been unclear, I certainly—

**Mr Scott:** No one explained that to me. No one told me that. They just said, "We've given your name to Yvonne O'Neill." I did not know what that meant.

**The Chair:** Okay. I am very sorry that there has been this misunderstanding and I will certainly attempt to clarify that with the person whom I think I need to clarify that with.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** After today, I pity the person.

**The Chair:** Excuse the gibing, please. I will certainly pass on your request today to Mr Chiarelli.

**Mr Scott:** We are committed to dialogue. We are committed to working with people and telling you our stories, but when we do not get a chance to do that, what is our last resort? Our last resort is to go to the media and blow the whole thing out of proportion.

1600

**The Chair:** I am sorry. I think our caucus was trying—and I am speaking now as a member of that caucus, not chair of this committee—to give you a broader avenue upon which to present your concerns. If you still want to meet with the caucus, as I say, I will take the message, as I am sure Mr McGuinty will, to our chairman that you still would like to do that and your request stands.

**Mr Scott:** We appreciate that. Thank you.

**Mr McGuinty:** I think you anticipated my remarks, Madam Chair, I would like to emphasize that the Ottawa-Carleton caucus now, for three years, has been meeting regularly, monthly, with groups from the area that bring to us problems which transcend riding boundaries. We have, inevitably, a backlog of people waiting to meet us. As the immediate past chairman of that caucus, Madam Chair, and I was the first chairman, if there has been a backlog and some misunderstanding or some fumbling at some desk, we regret it sincerely. As Madam Chair has rightly stated, I think perhaps that this is the more appropriate forum to which you could bring this, but it would not do any harm to meet with the eight members of the caucus, including two cabinet ministers, and we will certainly intervene on your behalf in that regard.

**The Chair:** I certainly know the members of the caucus have requested your brief to be transferred to them, through me, today. So we will leave that and we will follow it up. Thank you very much.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** Just one comment. I would love to get in on this.

**Mr McGuinty:** No, no, no.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** How impish can I be?

I think it is an excellent report, and I really appreciated the kind of documentation you gave in terms of the winners and losers of the new reform, or the limited gains that are there. I think it should be noted that at the bottom of page 3 of your report, that problem in public housing if the rents are increased—and those levels are something that most members are not aware of. You skipped past that. I think it is a very important point.

The only thing I would add is a friendly amendment, if I might, to your number 7 about this kind of communication with local members. It would be to also have self-help groups added to that. It is not just people working with people in poverty but people who are in poverty organized to meet as part of that network as well, obviously.

**Mr Scott:** I guess I assumed that, because that is a big part of who we are, self-help.

One thing that Mr Jackson asked about this morning—and he is not here—was the negative and positive buffer zones around

medical care. The government has made these improvements, but they are not substantial. The buffer zone that he talked about, that you qualify for your medical even if you are working, for a single person it is \$50. If you are a family, it is \$100. What it means is that they will pay for your drugs and teeth, etc, but it is only \$50 if you are a single person. It is not much. You do not have to be making very much money not to qualify. It is an improvement, and we encourage government to do it, but more needs to be done.

**Mr Allen:** Perhaps you would comment on whether there is an effect of minimizing the numbers, or reducing the apparent numbers of people in need, by virtue of the way in which regulations work through regional social services and so on. I think this varies from region to region, and maybe yours does not function this way, but are the people who come to the food bank services and emergency food services, for example, in Ottawa screened by and referred by regional social services? Are the numbers of times they can patronize those services limited, clearly and strictly, so that they may not return even though they have need?

**Ms Arnold:** There are some referrals that we receive from a variety of agencies, certainly regional welfare workers and FBA referrals, Elizabeth Fry, John Howard. There are a number of people who just find us and come in.

The rule of thumb for most programs in Ottawa is access once per month and it is about a two-day supply of food, maybe slightly more in the suburban programs. If there is real need, if people have no other alternative, then certainly both compassion and common sense encourage us to provide service more than once a month. If that is happening consistently, then certainly we would be making referrals such as the ones we have referred to, for home management counselling or whatever else might be appropriate.

**Mr Allen:** I know that I have heard agencies tell me that they might have a limit; for example, once every three months. I suspect this varies a good deal around the province. If that is the case, and if it is at all adhered to, quite clearly these numbers we are reading about are rather conservative.

**Ms Arnold:** I think until what a minimum standard of service represents is established, then the statistics really will not be valid.

**Mr Allen:** Yes, but they will err on the conservative side.

**Ms Arnold:** Yes, definitely.

**Mr Allen:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms Arnold and Mr Scott. No doubt I will be seeing you again.

**Mr Neumann:** There is a lot of erring on the Conservative side.

#### MINISTRY OF HEALTH

**The Chair:** Members of the committee, we have ready to be a resource person for us Dr Roch Khazen from the Ministry of Health. He is involved with family and public health. Although there is no plan for a formal presentation, he is certainly willing to answer any questions. Would you like to make some opening statement, just to give people a chance to collect their thoughts?

**Dr Khazen:** I would like to introduce a colleague of mine, Mara Komuvsh, who is a nutritionist with the public health branch. I asked Mara to join me in case there were some questions needing answers about nutrition and health.

**The Chair:** Would either of you like to make some statements, just to give us your initial reaction to what you have been

listening to in the last couple of hours or what you know we are studying? Could you give us any opening remarks?

**Dr Khazen:** I just want to say that the Ministry of Health, through the public health branch, does not provide direct service. The services in the area of health promotion, nutrition promotion and education are provided by local boards of health that are funded through transfer payments from the Ministry of Health. If you want to know about specific activities, these are the activities of certain specific boards of health.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** We had recent discussions around early identification of problems with children in the education system, and there are definite connections here with children and poverty, of course, but I was wondering if there has been much done that you are aware of around the province around the health impacts of poverty and if the ministry itself is involved at all in promoting various public health bodies around the province to do that research or is supporting research in any systematic way.

**Dr Khazen:** No, the only research we have is the one that was done by the federal government, a nutrition and health survey, and the second report on this that was published in 1979. That does show there are certain health implications when there is poverty and malnutrition.

However, I would like to add that the present Ontario health survey that is being conducted now, presently, does have a section on nutrition, on food intake and nutrients intake, and therefore the results will be linked to the socioeconomic status, educational level and age. So we will have specific information, at least more recent, on the effect of nutritional intake and the health status of the person.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** Are those the only breakdowns, socioeconomic levels, and how many of those are you breaking it down to?

**Dr Khazen:** There are if they were native-born, Canadian-born, an immigrant, the age, socioeconomic, educational level—is there anything else, Mara?

**Mrs Komuvsh:** I cannot remember any.

**Dr Khazen:** I think these were the main ones, if I remember.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** There is nothing specific on certain groups, for instance, native Indian population?

**Dr Khazen:** Yes.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** And a francophone-anglophone breakdown?

**Dr Khazen:** There is the immigration background, like English, southern European or wherever they came from.

1610

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** I just want to get an idea of the precision of it. Are you doing quintiles in terms of income?

**Dr Khazen:** I do not know if they have separated it at the moment, but the frame table that we have seen proposed so far does take this into account. I do know how much breakdown there is. Do you know, Mara?

**Mrs Komuvsh:** I cannot remember exactly, but I think it probably is about five categories.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** Is there any project at all anywhere in the province that is actually tracing the users—children specifically I am thinking of here—of food banks in terms of their health?



**Dr Khazen:** No. The involvement with the food banks is—I think this one is in Toronto—Stop 103 foodshare, where a public health nurse is involved in the counselling, education and demonstration, but not the follow-through to find out if there are any side effects.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** Is anybody doing any study at the moment in terms of the health, specifically of recipients of various forms of social assistance, welfare, family benefits, various categories?

**Dr Khazen:** Not to my knowledge.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** Is anybody dealing with any of the particular breakdown groups, for instance, ex-psychiatric patients?

**Dr Khazen:** No.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** It seems a little strange to me that when we know that there are severe implications from poverty on health, the province would not have been doing some specific work on that. But there has been nothing come down from the minister in terms of initiatives that should be undertaken, as far as you know?

**Dr Khazen:** No.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** Thank you.

**Mr Allen:** I think Mr Johnston has covered most of the questions that I was interested in, but I have no problem with that.

We have asked at various times that the Treasury undertake, in its assessment of the economic state of the province, to gauge the overall costs to the province of the poverty factor. I guess I would wonder whether the ministry has attempted at any point ever to calculate the effect of poverty on health in those terms, a sort of generalized estimate of how much of the health expenditure in the province is in fact generated by the consequences of poor health attributable to the poverty factor. Has anyone even begun working in that direction in your ministry, quite apart from globally in the government as a whole?

**Dr Khazen:** No. The only thing that we have been monitoring and following where nutrition does play a factor is the incidence of low birth weight, meaning babies born under 2,500 grams. As you are probably aware, low birth weight is a good indicator or a factor in the consequences of future health of the baby. This is why in the past five or six years, at least with the court mandatory program, the emphasis has been on preventing or decreasing the incidence of low birth weight; therefore, for instance the city of Toronto program on the healthiest babies possible, where they concentrate on that factor. This is one of the first major efforts in that sense. I cannot tell you exactly what is the actual cost on that, but every premature baby, depending on the birth weight, will need further—at least when the baby is born, and later on there are consequences. As I said, nutrition was a factor, but when it is multiplied again by other lifestyles, such as smoking or alcohol, the side effects or the ill health effects are quite high.

**Mr Allen:** One sometimes wonders, for example, whether doctors ought not to write prescriptions for food for certain people in the population and have a voucher that is automatically backed by the government to go with that, so that during a period of pregnancy or for a low-income mother or during a period of early childhood when nutrition is so important, that would become almost a health prescription that a doctor would be obliged to write under those circumstances and would be honoured in the appropriate supermarket or whatever. I think that is what my

leader had in mind when he asked the minister in December about whether she was tackling the problem of poverty and health, and she, of course, said, "Well, everything we do is in the best interests of Ontarians."

That is more an observation than a question. I realize that many of our questions are going to have political implications that you people are really not in a position to answer.

**Mrs Komuvesh:** I was just going to say that as far as the healthiest babies possible program in Toronto is concerned, and I realize it is only one program, it does in fact provide vouchers to women who need them for milk, and many of them do, and many of the mothers are on social assistance who are in that program.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** They still do not provide milk in the schools even; most places do not.

**Dr Khazen:** I could give you one or two examples. I am not saying they are providing it, but in Guelph and here in Toronto they have the breakfast club whereby they provide breakfast for children before they go to school. This is just one small step.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** That is the problem. There are these small steps, and it depends where you live in the province. It depends on the local jurisdiction.

**The Chair:** Dr Khazen, what resource is used for the provision of those programs? Are they boards of education that you are thinking of or are they from the district health council?

**Dr Khazen:** It is a combination of school staff, board of health staff and community people. They plan and they provide the service. In some, like here in Toronto, I understand the family or the parent pays 25 cents per breakfast. In Guelph I understand they pay \$1 per week for the breakfast but there is subsidy from various sources within the community.

**The Chair:** You would think maybe there are two or three ministries involved.

**Dr Khazen:** It is local staffing. It is the boards of health at the local level.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** But it is also the food programs here in Toronto that provide food to it. We were getting a lot of gesticulation there at the back to make sure that was not forgotten.

**Mr Neumann:** I think the last bit of conversation kind of touched a bit on the area I wanted to ask about. I wanted to ask whether in your studies or in your programming you were looking at the whole relationship between hungry children and poor learning and whether or not there was any kind of evaluation across the province in terms of trying to do something about meeting the needs of kids going to school hungry and therefore not being able to learn as effectively as they might.

**Dr Khazen:** There have been studies from the United States on that, correct, and this is why—

**Mr Neumann:** I meant within Ontario.

**Dr Khazen:** Yes. This is why I was going to say that what started it in Guelph was that the teachers had approached boards of health staff, saying: "We've been seeing those kids coming to school. Many, many times they are falling asleep at their desks. They haven't had breakfast," or "They're arriving with potato chips rather than the appropriate food," or "They didn't even have lunch." This is what started the ball rolling within the community to get everybody involved. There is a link between protein caloric

intake and your performance, especially when you are a child, and how much you are growing and increasing in weight and so on.

**Mr Neumann:** If one wanted to follow up on this in some way, what ministry would you say is the lead ministry to ask on this whole issue, Community and Social Services, Health, Education; who is taking the lead on this?

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** After you, Alphonse.

**Dr Khazen:** I think it could be a combination of three ministries.

**Mr Neumann:** Is there indeed a co-ordinating group working on this?

**Dr Khazen:** I think you were here the last time when we discussed it.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** Right over there when he asked you.

**Dr Khazen:** Yes. There is an interministry committee, yes, between Education and Health, and now we are forming one between Education and Community and Social Services in relation to child care, so we will have some forum to discuss those issues. I would like to mention—I do not know if the Minister of Community and Social Services has already noted—there is the pilot project called Better Beginnings, Better Futures. It is a triministry project where the three ministries are involved to take a group of people, especially in the low socioeconomic groups, whereby they will receive assistance, counselling, education and financial assistance from preconception up to school age to see if it does make a difference in the growth and development of the child, learning disability prevention, school dropout and the like.

1620

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** The direction is obscene.

**Mr Neumann:** I heard quite a bit about this on the select committee on education, and I have been pleased since then to find out that the children and youth services committee in our community is—

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** A few kids in the province are going to be followed for 25 years instead of doing something for the majority of them. No, it is obscene. I cannot stand being propagandized. It is obscene.

**Mr Neumann:** I was going to say that I was pleased to learn that the children and youth services committee in our area has pulled together all of the relevant groups and is putting together an excellent proposal for that program. While it certainly is not going to stop all of our problems, it is an excellent project.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** Review it in 25 years and see what happens.

**Mr D. W. Smith:** I think some of the discussion since I put my hand up to ask the question has likely taken place, but I want to re-emphasize the questions, I guess. Do you think, because you work for the Ministry of Health, maybe that we could offer prescriptions for food just as conveniently as we offer prescriptions for pills and that we might do more good by offering these items?

I do not know whether I am getting this clear or not, but I know that prescriptions for pills come very easy, or they seem to come very easy. Should we maybe have some program, and because Health is such a huge, huge budget within the government, could we offer somehow or other a doctor to give a prescription for food?

I am thinking of this through the school program, because they go there five days a week. Are there some families that could get a food voucher to help them and it would do them just as much good as some of the pills that they are prescribed now? That is what I am trying to follow along. I do not know whether you have got any comments on that or not.

**Mrs Komuvesh:** I guess my comment is that I do not think that is the solution either, and in a way it is similar to food banks in that it does not really address the underlying problems. Yes, we could do that, and that is very similar to what some boards of health are doing with their community groups when they have breakfast programs and lunch programs and so on, but it is not a long-term solution, I do not think. It is still sort of a Band-Aid approach to do that. I think we need to find out from the families whether this is the kind of assistance that they really want.

**Mr D. W. Smith:** I will admit that anything we talk about around this table is likely only a Band-Aid solution. I think if you want to get to the root problem, I do not know where you should go, but I think our society, in sectors, is out of balance, and I think that is partly the problem, but I do not know whether you would even want to discuss it around this table here.

When I suggested that, I am sure it is only a Band-Aid solution. I can think that if we do not get more of a balance between all sectors of society, we are still going to have these ongoing problems, but that is going back to a very basic economic problem and I do not think we can even discuss it at these meetings at this level.

**Mr Allen:** I really want to scotch that whole idea of prescriptions for food. I mentioned it tongue in cheek as a kind of poking a little bit of good humour at the ministry, but I really did not intend anybody to take that seriously as the solution to the hunger problem in Ontario.

I think that Mr Smith is getting pretty close to the mark when he talks about re-establishing some redistributive balance in the wealth of the communities. We can do that through taxation systems, we can do it through our minimum wage legislation, we can do it through social assistance levels, we can do it through a variety of ways that are quite global and could be quite effective, but, no, I would not want to get into that kind of a piecemeal, voucher, prescription approach to people's hunger at all.

**The Chair:** Thank you. Are there any further questions? Thank you both very much for coming this afternoon, and I am sure that you will be reading our report with great interest.

If I may just make a couple of announcements, there have been some changes for tomorrow. I would ask that you come at 10 am. We do have a guest from out of country and I do want to begin on time. Unfortunately, we had the trouble today and we were 20 minutes late and have been all afternoon.

The change tomorrow is that Windsor has agreed to accommodate us by moving its presentation from 4 pm to 1:40 pm. It is a 20-minute presentation. Three members of the committee, myself included, could not stay until the four o'clock presentation, so that presentation will be made at 1:40 pm.

At the moment, the schedule for Thursday is as follows: One group from Sudbury has consented to come, so we would be meeting at 10 am with them, as we had said earlier today. If the second group from the north can come, we will do that at 10:15, so 10 and 10:15 for those two presentations. However, if only that one group can come, I would suggest that we have a steering committee meeting at 10 o'clock on Thursday and that we begin at one o'clock to meet with the two groups from the north, because I think then that would free up the rest of the committee for other



duties on Thursday morning. The steering committee can meet and then the whole committee. I will have to get that information to you tomorrow. Unfortunately, we have not been able to firm up the second group from the north.

So at the moment, if you save tomorrow, all day, and come back a little earlier from your lunch, and save Thursday afternoon, starting a little early again, about 1-1:30, that is what we are looking at. The steering committee should be available all day Thursday.

**Mr D. W. Smith:** Is there nothing that we could do on Wednesday if time gets short?

**The Chair:** We have been asked by the research team, and I think it is a reasonable request, that Wednesday be the day they write their report. It is only one day. We are having over 20 hearings, closer to 30 or 35. It is really impossible for any research person to bring that together in less than a day. I think we have to grant one day, and that was agreed to by the steering committee long before.

**Mr Neumann:** What time will we have a copy of the report?

**Ms Drummond:** I would anticipate sending a draft to the subcommittee members on Thursday morning.

**The Chair:** You would have it here for us at 10 o'clock.

**Mr Neumann:** My question is, can we get it an hour earlier to look it over before the meeting?

**Ms Drummond:** Certainly. I can try to do that.

**Mr Neumann:** That would be really great.

**The Chair:** Okay. This is a very tight schedule. I understand we are the second committee that has tried to live within these time frames, and hopefully we can meet them. I think we have accomplished a lot today. Thank you all very much. I adjourn this first day of hearings of the standing committee on social development on the issue of food banks.

The committee adjourned at 1628.

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## STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

**Chair:** O'Neill, Yvonne (Ottawa-Rideau L)

**Vice-Chair:** Neumann, David E. (Brantford L)

Allen, Richard (Hamilton West NDP)

Cunningham, Dianne E. (London North PC)

Elliot, R. Walter (Halton North L)

Fawcett, Joan M. (Northumberland L)

Grandmaître, Bernard C. (Ottawa East L)

Jackson, Cameron (Burlington South PC)

Johnston, Richard F. (Scarborough West NDP)

Keyes, Kenneth A. (Kingston and The Islands L)

Stoner, Norah (Durham West L)

### Substitutions:

Faubert, Frank (Scarborough-Ellesmere L) for Mrs Stoner

McGuinty, Dalton J. (Ottawa South L) for Mr Grandmaître

Smith, David W. (Lambton L) for Mr Elliot

Villeneuve, Noble (Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry PC) for Mrs Cunningham

**Clerk:** Decker, Todd

**Clerk pro tem:** Freedman, Lisa

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Khazen, Dr Roch, Chief, Family Health, Public Health Branch

Komuvesh, Mara, Consultant, Public Health Nutrition, Public Health Branch





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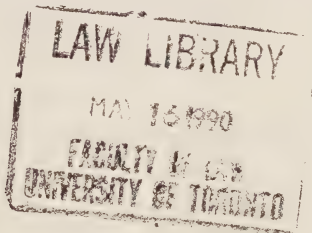
Second Session, 34th Parliament

## **Official Report of Debates (Hansard)**

Tuesday 6 March 1990

### **Standing Committee on Social Development**

Food Banks



Chair: Yvonne O'Neill  
Clerk: Todd Decker

Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario  
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Le mardi 6 mars 1990

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Banques alimentaires

Président : Yvonne O'Neill  
Greffier : Todd Decker

Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario  
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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Tuesday 6 March 1990

The committee met at 1007 in room 151.

### FOOD BANKS (continued)

**The Vice-Chair:** Ladies and gentlemen, could we call the committee to order. Our chairman has been delayed and so, as vice-chairman, I will start the meeting, because we do have a rather tight agenda for the whole day and it is important that we not get too far behind.

**Mr McGuinty:** If I may take about 30 seconds, I am a casual drop-in, filler-in on the committee, and therefore I appreciate any background material provided. For the record, I simply wanted to pay tribute to our research service. I see the name Alison Drummond. I am sure that others were involved. As one who for 40 years was involved in research, I know it is easy to write this document; just glue your ass to a chair for about 15 hours. I think it is excellent backup material and I thank Alison sincerely. I spent an hour with her this morning and learned more about what is going on here than I have learned in the last six months.

**The Vice-Chair:** I am glad you are still learning and I am sure we all share the sentiments. I think we should move along with our presentations.

### NANCY AMIDEI

**The Vice-Chair:** We are fortunate today to have a spokesman on this subject from outside of the country. I would like to welcome Nancy Amidei and ask her to take the chair opposite. Nancy is an antipoverty lobbyist and advocate from Washington, DC. Welcome to Canada and welcome to Ontario. We are looking forward to hearing what you have to say on this subject.

**Ms Amidei:** I want you to know how pleased I am to be able to take part in this set of hearings. I only wish that we had a similar review going on in the United States right now, or possibly even four or five years ago.

**Mr McGuinty:** We are ahead of you in that way.

**Ms Amidei:** Did I walk right into that?

**Mr Jackson:** It takes a new member of this committee to bring it to light, just for the record.

Interjections.

**Mr Jackson:** He had my full support.

**Ms Amidei:** Let me just tell you very briefly that I have been involved in antihunger issues now going all the way back to 1967, so when I talk it is from rather more than a few years of—

[Failure of sound system]

**Mr Keyes:** Mr Chairman, the mikes are off again.

**The Vice-Chair:** We could just stop for a minute.

**Mr D. W. Smith:** If the light is on, you are on, but if it is not, it is dead.

**The Vice-Chair:** These brand-new mikes were installed. If the committee is in agreement, we could continue without the mikes and go with the shorthand notes of Hansard. Just speak up a little louder and we will all hear you.

**Ms Amidei:** Very good. Just a bit of background: I have had about 25 years of working on these types of hearings, both in government and outside. I worked for four years for the old Senate hunger committee. I worked for the Carter administration in the early part of the 1980's I headed a food research and action centre. The last couple of years I spent working with local groups.

Hunger grows out of the central problem of poverty and I think it is fair to say in a summary way that over the years since hunger was discovered in the United States in 1967 we have had various ways of trying to do something about it. I think a lot of us who regarded ourselves as part of the hunger movement have regarded that as having made a lot of progress over the years, but in the 1990's hunger is again a growing problem, so we have obviously not done something right.

Part of the effort to relieve poverty in our country has taken the form of charity efforts, charity food distributions, which quite rightly is the subject of your inquiry these days. Like you, we had a recession in the early 1980's. People responded to what they thought was going to be a short-term crisis. Mind you, the trouble in our country was compounded by the fact that a change in administrations was followed by a steep cut in assistance to low-income people. We had rising rates of unemployment, poverty and declining public assistance. As a result, we had rising evidence of hunger.

What happened was that the organizations that existed at the time, like the Salvation Army or the Catholic Worker, suddenly found their numbers growing, and they found their clientele changed. They now were having to help not just these elderly, alcoholic men but a growing population of families with children and, usually, employed parents. That was a shock.

We had a spurt of extraordinary activity. Church groups, antipoverty volunteers stepped forward. They organized food kitchens, etc. They organized even bigger food banks. But in any case, people were doing whatever they could to respond to the fact of hunger. Now it is at least 10 years later, and one thing we have certainly learned is that the so-called short-term crisis is not short-term. What we are dealing with is not people with a one-time emergency, but people with a chronic need for food. Some of them are people who are hungry because of what is going on in the housing market. There is not enough affordable housing. They cut back on food in order to pay the rent. By the way, generally our soup kitchen population is people who do not have homes to go to. Our food bank population tends to be people who can prepare it somewhere else.

In any case, our short-term emergency is not over. The emergency drags on, and if the evidence coming in is to be believed, it is, in many cases, getting worse. We have learned that there are several questions to which emergency food outlets provide an answer. How can a community respond to short-

term emergency food needs? They answer questions like, what can be done with food that otherwise would be wasted?

Another question that has been asked and that is being answered is, are there ways for middle-class people to learn at first hand about the problems of low-income people? This is a way for people to get involved in the lives of their low-income neighbours. It is good for sending a signal to a community that someone else cares.

## 1020

Food banks do not eliminate hunger. Food banks are not the answer to low wages and they are not a substitute for low-cost housing. They do not make up for government policies. We have learned that food banks are not an adequate answer when social insurance falls short. No matter how efficiently they are run, food banks are not an answer to long-term, chronic, systemic hunger. We have learned that when we depend on charity food, people go hungry. In many communities the emergency food providers raise as many questions as they answer. For example, is it possible that all these food drives create a false sense of security? It may lead people to think that the problem of hunger has been solved.

In the United States we can now see massive annual food drives that sometimes take six months to form. They work hard for six months. Then the food they collect gets parcelled out. Then when you ask them, "How long did it last?" they say: "Weeks. If we're lucky, months." Sometimes the money we get can be used in the summertime when donations are low. It takes six months of effort to collect enough food to last a couple of months.

Some 20-plus years now after we rediscovered hungry people in the United States, we find ourselves depending on a system that provides a limited number of meals on a limited number of days in a limited number of communities and serves just a fraction of those suffering from malnutrition. I would be willing to bet that in any city in America you could get a three-day bag of groceries, but I would also be willing to bet that there is not a city in America where you could get food to feed a family seven days a week. You could come to our soup kitchen, but we are only open during the evening or for breakfasts. You cannot feed families out of an emergency food kitchen. The emergency system cannot feed the family.

As to the notion that it is useful to have a way for middle-income people to be involved with people's lives, and also the notion that we hear in the United States that it is better to know if the food comes through a charitable organization rather than by right as a matter of government policies, I think the only people who make that argument are people who do not have to rely on charity food.

I remember meeting a woman outside of a church food bank. She was sitting beside a tree, I said hello and asked if she was here to get some food. She said: "Yes, I am. I did come for food, but I don't want to go down there now."

I said, "The people down there are very nice."

The other woman replied that she knew one of the women in the food bank very well. "We sit on the PTA. That's why I can't go down there." So she was waiting until the shift changed. Knowing somebody doesn't make it easier to beg.

One day I stopped to see an Episcopal priest. To get into his office, I went past a mountain of donated food, donated clothes, past a soup kitchen. I suggested he rename his church the Emergency Episcopal Church.

"Don't you be fooled," was his reply. "If I wanted to be certain that the good people of this country did nothing about

poverty, I'd put a thousand hungry people on their doorsteps. And I know what they would do. They'd organize people to donate some food; organize others to collect and transport the food; organize still more to stack and serve the food; they'd even organize people to clean up after the food was given out or catered. They'd be so busy moving cans from one end of town to the other, they'd have no time or energy left to do anything about why so many people were hungry in the first place." Right. In our case, that is largely what has happened.

Your experience is newer and can benefit from ours. Fifty-plus years with charity drives: They do not work. Although as an antihunger advocate I have worked to expand the food stamps program, I would urge you never to start one. I do not think that makes a lot of sense. I would not invent them if they did not exist.

After years of watching food stamps, surplus commodities and all the various programs that we have, my clear preference is for policies that ensure people the incomes they need to feed themselves through the normal food distribution system, by which I mean grocery stores. Government should not be, in my view, subsidizing those kinds of efforts, nor should government be creating a special currency, which is what food stamps are, just so that poor people can be labelled as poor and needing help from the government to eat. Nor do I think anybody who thought about it would want to set up a secondary food delivery system when we have a perfectly good one, but that is what food pantries and food banks are.

## 1030

Neither would I opt to have all the special requirements that we now attach to the receipt of food. For example, we require high-risk pregnant women to go to a doctor or a clinic to have health personnel write them a prescription. There is something a little bit odd about that in a country as rich as ours. In countries like ours, where food is not scarce and where food supply is not the problem, not feeding kids or anybody else is not just shortsighted, it is cruel. We could do better. I trust you could do better.

I have just one last little set of comments because I do not want you to leave thinking that I do not see anything good that you could draw from our experience. Being an American, of course, I have to offer something good, right? So I am going to mention just briefly three things and then anybody can ask anything he likes.

First, we have learned that some government food programs can be very effective. We have some new, recent studies showing the impact. Second, there are the programs that help senior citizens by providing home-delivered meals to shut-ins or congregate meals to people who would otherwise be leading very socially isolated lives. They operate as food programs. They are probably more social programs than anything, but they are very effective.

Second, food banks may not be the answer to hunger, but they can certainly help in genuine short-term emergencies—a fire, a flood, a disaster or something—and they can perform a very useful service to other nonprofit social agencies. In Rochester, New York, for example, the fellow who runs the big food bank down there collects up not just food but cleaning products that would otherwise be thrown away, computer paper, office supplies, all kinds of things and then makes those available at 10 or 12 cents a pound to not-for-profit agencies. He says, quite honestly: "If we relieve some hunger as a byproduct, that's a bonus, but I'm not here to end hunger, because I know we can't. What I am here to do is provide a service to other



not-for-profits in the community so that they have these kinds of goods at low cost." That is a reasonable thing to think about doing.

Finally, food banks can function as a kind of early warning system. In my mind, they are little bit like the canaries that we used to send down into the mines because they were especially sensitive to what was going on in the air. If the air went bad, the canaries died and then you took action, right? You either got the men out of the mine or you got a new supply of good, fresh air into the mine.

**Mr McGuinty:** Or more canaries.

**Ms Amidei:** Or more canaries, exactly the point. If food banks are the warning system, the canaries, because they are more sensitive to what is happening in low-income communities, then we have a choice. When they start filling up with people and when they start proliferating, we can treat them like the early warning system they are and put the systems in place and act or we can just watch the bodies pile up. That is the choice that you people have to make, I think.

I think I will stop there, and if anybody would like to ask anything, I will be glad to pontificate or offer objective, unbiased comments.

**The Vice-Chair:** Thank you for your presentation. We are back on our microphones. We have been listening to Nancy Amidei, antipoverty lobbyist and advocate from Washington, DC. I have three people who have indicated a desire—now four—to ask questions. We are to limit this to half an hour and we started at 1010, so we have about seven minutes.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** It is a pleasure having you here. I disagree with your last thesis entirely, frankly. I think these are late warning systems. There are people suffering a long time before they show up at food banks and I would hate them to be used in that fashion or seen to be useful in that fashion. As much as I would like a training ground for the middle class to learn about poverty, I think if you started opening homes of the rich so they can learn about wealth, that might be a nicer idea.

**Ms Amidei:** I like that. I will take that back as a suggestion.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** Absolutely. I have been concerned for some years. I went down in 1984 and talked to Ted Kennedy's people when he was doing sort of a relook at poverty again, I guess in terms of trying his own presidential aspirations at that stage, because nothing really came of it later on.

I guess my basic question is this, in terms of what we can learn from you: We do not have a system which is based on food stamps. We do not have a system which says that tomato ketchup can be considered a vegetable in terms of the diets of people. We do have a system which, although it is in my view much more progressive than any that are available in the United States, is still having major problems, in spite of the fact that we do not have a lot of the downsides of Reaganomics that have, as you say, exacerbated the problems with you. We do have a major difficulty here.

I do not know if you are aware of the work that has been done on our Transitions report, which is about the only progressive proposition that I have seen, except out of Massachusetts and one or two other places, for changes to the welfare system. But I am wondering, in terms of the underlying problems of poverty, what is it that we can learn from the United States? I

think all we can really look at primarily are bad examples of things to avoid.

**Ms Amidei:** The short answer is yes, but I think you already have the beginnings of a good system. You have more than just the beginnings of it. From what I have been told about that report you referred to, the Social Assistance Review Committee report, it sounds like you have the elements there. You just have to make sure they get put in place.

We do know what to do about poverty, don't we? We know that income, at heart, is what we are talking about. People are poor because they do not have incomes, and there are a variety of ways to ensure that, depending on why they do not have incomes. But you know that as well we do and you have to construct a system that fits your politics in your polity.

Certainly something that would make your children's allowances go farther for families with children, something that would make it possible for people who are in low-paying jobs to have a place they can afford to live would do a lot. You know what those elements are, though. You just have to put them in place. What I would hope you would not do is decide to punt and rely on the emergency food system as though that is some sort of answer or to try to reconstruct a new version of food stamps, because that is also not the answer.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** All we are is a parliamentary committee to maybe suggest setting some targets for the gradual elimination of the universal role that is being asked of food banks at the moment, to get them back to the emergency kinds of food banks you are talking about, the role they do well, and set a timetable for implementing the kinds of programs that should be done and then say that within five years or whatever we should be doing these kinds of things. What is the useful thing that you think can come out this kind of process at this juncture?

**Ms Amidei:** You might sort out what the appropriate roles are and are not of the private and the public sector. For example, it seems to me that you can see a useful, long-term role for emergency food providers in meeting short-term emergencies, provided you make it clear that the government has a responsibility for meeting the long-term needs.

You could see yourselves phasing out the role that they have now assumed for long-term hunger needs and phasing in maybe a growing role for the kind of thing that is going on in Rochester, where there is simply a kind of recycling operation, making goods of all kinds available at low cost and not-for-profit social agencies. That seems to me to be a useful thing that you might do, help sort out whose role is what and to keep the gun to the head of the polity to say, "For the pieces that are our responsibility, we are going to hold ourselves accountable and responsible."

**The Chair:** Good morning. I am the Chair of the committee. Unfortunately, I was delayed getting here this morning. The Vice-Chair, I am sure, has done an admirable job.

We have a difficult choice to make, folks, because we are now 30 minutes into this presentation and that is the time allotted for the presentation. I have a request from four speakers to ask questions. I have also a request from the sound people for a five-minute recess. We have now condensed our day to a one-hour lunch. Please give me some guidance. Can we go on to the next presentation? I hate to do that. Do you want to try to split the time? I know Nancy has come a long way. What would you like to do at the moment? We have David Smith, Dalton

McGuinty, Richard Allen and Cam Jackson requesting questions.

1040

**Mr Jackson:** Madam Chair, if you would refer to us as questioners and not as speakers, I think that would help.

**The Chair:** That may help. All right, Mr Smith, you want me to go on. We will have a time limit of one minute each.

**Mr D. W. Smith:** I will try to do this as quickly as I can. I have seen this statistic not very long ago. It came out of the United States, so this is why I bring it up with you. I wonder if you are aware that this statistic started way back in about 1940 and it showed that as the farm income dropped, relative to the other sectors of society, the debt of the country and the people rose accordingly. As we talked yesterday with some of the people, it seems to me whatever we do—and a lot of these programs, I will admit seem good, but in my opinion they are only Band-Aids. I wonder if you have had any insight into these statistics. I think they came from an independent banker out in the Midwest, who has survived. It seems to me that he had it perfectly, that we are not getting enough dollars at the bottom to create the wealth that works through the system up to the top.

**Ms Amidei:** I do not remember running across what you have just described. The nub of the question, though, has to do with, if we invest enough at the bottom, are we going to see a payoff farther up the line?

**Mr D. W. Smith:** It is not necessarily investments, but the commodity prices have to be given their fair share or their cost plus a profit. If they do not, then those dollars never get the opportunity to flow through the system the way they should. I thought it was a tremendous article. In fact, there is the Farm Act of 1953 in the US that almost says that we are not going to have fair pricing for agriculture. I happen to be a farmer, so I know a little bit about reality. Our farm numbers are going down. There seems to be poverty in the rural areas. I am wondering if this is not just working through society and today it is coming to a head. Thank you, Madam Chair.

[Failure of sound system]

**Mr Allen:** I believe that what is happening in the United States is a much more extensive institutionalization at all levels of food bank operations. If one of your theses is "avoid that," I wonder if you could detail too the specifics that should be avoided by way of further institutionalization which would entrench the system, make it more difficult for us to move on to the real supports we need.

**Ms Amidei:** I think some of the obvious things are that you find yourself investing more and more in the bricks and mortar, if you will, because as you gradually institutionalize this emergency system, you need warehouses and trucks, you need refrigeration, you need pallets, you need the kinds of mechanical devices that will lift an entire pallet full of food. It becomes an increasingly costly proposition. You cannot get around it. Once you get—

[Failure of sound system]

**Ms Amidei:** —among the people who work in those places are people who are only volunteers one hour a week, or they are retarded adults or they are people who are frantic and are working, paying off the food that they get. Despite the fact that you posted the notice up three months ago, it may not be

obvious to everybody that the box has to be opened and cannot go out to a family some place and should not be taken home.

We run into a whole host of problems like that. We run into the fact that because we subsidize grain so heavily in our country, anywhere from a third to sometimes over half of the products in the food banks are grain-based, because it is cheap, and so the quality control is less good.

There are all kinds of silly stuff out there. You find yourself investing a lot of money to house and stack and distribute non-nutritional foods. I used to go through food banks full of something called Sauce Duvine. It was a wine-flavoured, nonalcoholic sauce for meat which, for very good reasons, did not sell, and close by it on the shelves were stacks of something that you poured over ice-cream that made a little shell—chocolate flavoured, butterscotch flavoured, strawberry flavoured—except that it was not made well and once it hardened you could not unhard it. If you tried to break this thing with a pickaxe, you could not break it. That was all over the food banks.

Families could come and get a lifetime supply of Frito-Lay products, Sauce Duvine and ice-cream shell. That did not mean they were going to be feeding their families well, and yet somebody had to pay for the trucks, the equipment, the pallets, the people, the warehousing and the refrigeration and all the rest of it to take care of the Sauce Duvine. At some point, you have to ask yourself whether that is the most efficient way to deal with the problem of hunger or to use public funds.

**The Chair:** I am going to have to ask that your answers be short. We really are under very strict time constraints.

**Mr Jackson:** We are hearing a lot about the relationship between affordable housing for the poor and food banks, and you have not mentioned that. You briefly mentioned it, but we have a series of problems in terms of delivering affordable housing to people making \$12,000 to \$13,000 a year. Our definition of affordable housing is up around \$100,000 to \$150,000 as an affordable house now.

I am interested in your response in areas of universal programs for rent control versus shelter subsidies. From your national perspective, have you been able to see states which have been able to narrow that gap in terms of reducing the amount put into housing so that there is that much more available for food and clothing? Can you comment very briefly in that area, or direct our research people to some information in that area.

**Ms Amidei:** I can suggest a couple of areas. They tend to be areas where the economy is booming and expanding and where business wants to move in and developers want to move in. Then they adopt a policy called linkage. Anybody who wants to build a fancy high-rise or a condominium has to agree to also build affordable housing units or put money into a pot for rehabilitating old buildings or something like that. That was going on in Boston for a long time, in Portland, Oregon, in a number of communities on the west coast that were expanding. It tends not to work, politically, and for obvious reasons, where the economy is in a slump and where nobody wants to move in.

Another place where there is something very interesting going on is Los Angeles. They got one of these linkage policies in place and they now refer to the golden egg, a big, gold-hued building that is generating a lot of revenues for low-income housing. They used it to rehab old hotels and turn those hotels into very low-cost housing for single people, couples, disabled people, elderly people. They have done a magnificent job, and there is something called the SRO Corp, meaning single-room



occupancy, headed by a man named Andy Robeson, that could help you with that.

In Washington, DC, generally, there is a group called the Low-Income Housing Coalition. They tend to be a very good repository of examples like that around the country of where people have found ways to generate a little bit more affordable housing. It is a problem for us as well, though, in a major way.

1050

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. I am sure that your presentation will be very interesting reading for me when I get the chance to read Hansard. Mr McGuinty, I will give you first shot next go.

**Mr McGuinty:** Pardon?

**The Chair:** You get the first question next time, okay?

**Mr McGuinty:** No, it is not okay, as a matter of fact. For some reason, some topsy-turvy inversion of the speaking list, I was bumped from second to nothing.

**The Chair:** Then please ask your question.

**Mr McGuinty:** It is not a question. I have a response to the injunction of my colleague from the third party. It is an observation.

I think your presentation was brilliant. We have sitting behind you two gentlemen—and many others, I think, from yesterday—who gave us some crystal-clear examples of the problems they are having. The thing that you have helped to clarify in my mind is that you have abstracted to the principles we should be concerned with here, that a setup, short-term emergency help, really no longer is adequate. What we are doing is trying to cure a cancer of the liver with a Band-Aid.

I think you have helped to crystallize my own thinking. I feel like Paul on the road to Damascus. I thought of this as a kind of ancillary, a kind of optional backup system for other government programs. I have seen what you are speaking of living in Dallas, in Chicago and in Boston. I thank you very much for your brilliant abstraction of principles that we should be concerned with, and not merely in response to the plight of individual people who come to us with very convincing and very compelling stories. Your trip from Washington is well worth while. I can only suggest that we visit you and you show us around the capital.

**Ms Amidei:** You might want to come when the weather is good.

**The Chair:** Thank you for being forceful in your closing statement, Mr McGuinty. It helped. I would ask that we take a five-minute recess.

The committee recessed at 1052.

1058

**The Chair:** Is Havi Echenberg with us now? I understand she stepped out. In that case, I am going to ask Mr Offord to come forward. He is here. We are making up time. Mr Offord is a professor at McMaster University. I have spoken with him and he has consented to condense his time to 20 rather than 30 minutes, and that will help us a lot, and then we will have the regular presentations as we proceed.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** Here is Havi now.

**The Chair:** Havi, you will be on in a minute. We are going to have Mr Offord first, since you were not in the room. It is just a case of transposing.

D. R. OFFORD

**Dr Offord:** My name is Dan Offord. I am a child psychiatrist for McMaster University. I was one of the principal investigators in the Ontario Child Health Study. What I would like to do this morning is briefly present some of the data from this study as it applies to economically disadvantaged children in Ontario. If you just follow through the handout, it provides the basis for my remarks.

The Ontario Child Health Study was a cross-sectional community survey of over 3,000 children and their families carried out in 1983. We gathered a good deal of data on the health status of these children in the mental health realm, in the physical health domain and also in terms of alcohol, drugs and tobacco use. We also were able to gather information on the correlates, or indicators, of disordered health states and also the consequences of disordered health states, particularly associated impairments and utilization of services.

If you will look at the second sheet here, and I will just follow across the top line of the second sheet because it is the same format in all the slides, here I have divided the sample of 3,000 into low-income families, that is, less than \$10,000 total income for the family in 1982, the year preceding the survey, and then the not-low-income. I give the percentages of the different psychiatric disorders, and the "relative odds" is simply a measure of strength between low income and the variables, such as hyperactivity. So relative odds of 2.7 indicate that if you are a child coming from a family with an income less than \$10,000, the odds of your having hyperactivity are 2.7 times that of a child raised in a family with an income above \$10,000. The significance indicates whether that relationship could have occurred by chance.

The major point I want to make in this first table is that economically disadvantaged children, as we have defined them, are at a much-increased risk for all the major psychiatric disorders that we measured in the survey. For instance, if you look at the second one, conduct disorder—a major mental health problem in Ontario and Canada; this refers to kids who chronically break rules and are chronically aggressive—you find that if a child is raised in a home where the total family income is less than \$10,000, the odds of his having conduct disorder are four times that of a child raised in a home with an income over \$10,000.

If you move to the second table, I want to point out just one thing in this table, and that is that psychiatric disorders, or mental health problems, in children can be identified not just by the parents but also by the teachers and by the kids themselves. When we look at kids 6 to 11, the major identifiers of mental disorders are both the parents and the teachers. The point I want to make here is that the informant, or the source that increases the rate of psychiatric disorders in poor kids, is teachers, so it is the teacher-identified disorders that push these rates up.

If you look, for instance, at conduct disorder—again, this is another name for antisocial children—you will find that the percentage of conduct disorder identified by the parent is four per cent in the low-income families, compared to 1.8 per cent in other families, and the relative odds are 2.7. But if you move down to the second line, teacher, you find here that the differential between the low-income and not-low-income families is much greater. For instance, if you are a poor child growing up in Ontario in a poor home, the odds of your being identified as

conduct-disordered by the teacher are about seven times that of a child growing up in a not poor home. The same thing holds for the other disorders, hyperactivity and emotional disorders.

Just to move to the third sheet, the point I want to make here is that it is not just in the mental health realm that these kids have problems, but the problems they have extend across the spectrum of morbidities or poor outcomes. Here I have listed poor school performance, that is, failing a grade or full-time special class placement. If you are a poor child in Ontario, the odds of your having poor school performance are almost three times that of a middle-class child. Chronic health problems are twice the rate; regular smoker is 2.6 times the rate.

We took a whole bunch of data on positive aspects of kids. I have just listed one here. If you are a poor child, you have about half the chance of participating in coached or supervised activities compared to middle-class kids.

It is clear that these morbidities in kids are widespread in poor kids, and they overlap. So a poor child is at risk for not only one of these morbidities or poor outcomes but a host of them, and they overlap in the same child. They also have fewer protective factors.

The next slide, I just gave you a feeling here. It is not just the child who is at risk. Again, you see that when you look at the kind of families they come from, these kids come from families where there is a much greater frequency of social assistance, single parents, subsidized housing, being unemployed, low education of mother and overcrowding. So it is clear that economic disadvantage is a marker, a risk indicator, of all sorts of bad outcomes for children.

Now the issue is, how does it work? I mean, what are the mechanisms by which this works? Here we are not on nearly as firm ground, and a lot more research is needed. I will just give you two slides on this from our own data. If you look at the next one, which says, "Prevalence of one or more psychiatric disorders for children of single- versus two-parent families," you find that the offspring of single parents, children of single parents, in Ontario are at a much increased risk for psychiatric disorder. Somebody can say, "We know though that about 40 per cent of single parents with kids between the ages of 4 and 16 are on welfare and they are poor." So what happens if you take into account the fact that single parents are poor? How, then, do their offspring do?

Here you see in this slide I have divided the families into those with a family income under \$10,000 and those with a family income over \$10,000. You find here that the offspring of poor single parents do as well as the offspring of poor two-parent families. The same for the richer single-parent and two-parent families. So it looks as if a lot of the action that puts the children of single parents at disadvantage is the fact that a large minority of single parents are poor. When in fact you take that into account, the offspring of single parents seem to do as well as the offspring of two parents.

If you look at the next slide—it is almost getting near the end here—I have the same setup, only here I have looked at children who are the offspring of parents on social assistance. I have divided them into those where the total family income was less than \$10,000 and those where the total family income was over \$10,000, and I am looking here at psychiatric disorder again.

Here what you find, of course, is that poor kids have more psychiatric disorder than not poor kids. But even among welfare kids or kids on social assistance, when you take into account the fact that they are poor, these kids again appear to be at increased risk. So it looks as if the difficulty with children on

welfare is complicated. Part of it involves the fact that they are poor, and there are other factors at work which we do not understand, something about the process of being on welfare, the kind of experiences people have on welfare. Whatever it is, it appears to put these kids at increased risk over and above the fact that they are poor.

Now the next page, I will just sum up. If you look in this province at economically disadvantaged children, the thing that strikes you is that they have multiple and overlapping morbidities. That term simply means bad outcomes. They tend to have psychiatric disorders, chronic health problems, smoking, poor school performance. All the kinds of things I do not want for my kids, they have in much greater amounts. Particularly, they have an excess of teacher-identified psychiatric disorder. So teachers find these kids particularly troublesome and push them into the disorder category. They also come from families where there are multiple adversities.

When you look at the plight of economically disadvantaged children in Ontario, you will find that their deficits are not ministry-specific. They extend across ministries, and thus programs that are going to be in place to raise the life quality of poor children cannot be ministry-specific. They are going to involve the ministries of Community and Social Services, Health, Housing, Tourism and Recreation, etc.

On the last summary page, it is clear that economic disadvantage that we have measured, if you measure it another way, is an indicator for children at risk. We need to learn more about the causal processes by which this risk indicator appears to have its effects on children or, at least, involves other processes that have their effects on children.

The last point, I think that if one is to raise the life quality of economically disadvantaged children in this province and improve their life chances, it is going to be due to a combination of economic factors and noneconomic interventions for these children and their families.

I will stop there.

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**Mr Allen:** I put up my hand early in the presentation because I wanted to ask that question about whether the welfare component factored out as a significant element as against low income, and you certainly moved in on that towards the end.

Let me understand a little bit more clearly. When you indicated that there were components of the welfare situation that we still, as you put it, do not understand, I presume that means they have not been the subject of extensive scientific investigation and analysis.

**Dr Offord:** Correct.

**Mr Allen:** I wonder whether you none the less, as a result of your work, have some hunches or hints for the committee in that respect and how you would weigh the two elements. If you were advising a government at this point in time to move with respect to the problem of low-income children, would you yourself worry or weigh excessively around those other factors, or would you be more prone to move on the income-related, support-level programs that would lift at least poor families out of that category in general?

**Dr Offord:** I think that is a central question. It is a very important question. My feeling is that the problem will not be solved by an either/or. I think that clearly these kids and these families need more money, but it is clear that the problems these kids have, not all the kids in poverty have, and many others in the population have them. So I think it is also going to



need specific intervention packages for these kids. I do not think money or economic reforms alone will do it. In addition, there will have to be very specific problems. Let me give you an example.

If you look at poor girls on welfare in this province, the offspring of parents on social assistance between the ages of 6 and 11, 28 per cent of these kids are failing in school or have full-time special class placement by the time they are 11 years of age. If you think of what this marker does in the next generation, girls have much higher rates than boys. We know that boys have more school problems than girls except in this population. Now the issue is, what are you going to do about that? How does that come about?

I am not sure of the mechanisms, but my guess is that the solution will be a combination of economic reforms and non-economic reforms. I have asked teachers and these kids themselves, "Why is it that you have so much of a problem in school?"

The things we have come up with to try to investigate are that, first of all, a lot of these kids apparently stay at home to look after their younger siblings, so they miss a lot of school. Second, the teachers in these schools say they know these kids have had problems for years but the fact is they have been using their time up trying to control these boys, and these girls quietly fail. Third, a very sensitive principal in Toronto said that she felt that in her school it might be that poor girls were discriminated against. A boy is a boy, but these poor girls have a very tough time with their peers and teachers.

The point I am making is that economic reform alone will not do the trick with the school fare. It will be a combination of that and very specific programs going after these very specific problems.

**Mr McGuinty:** Mr Allen referred to extensive scientific investigation and analysis. Dr Offord, what was involved in this? How long did it take?

**Dr Offord:** We planned the survey for about two and a half years. The field work was done by Statistics Canada and the survey itself took about two months.

**Mr McGuinty:** Did you have reason to suspect any of these conclusions before you started the survey?

**Dr Offord:** Reason to suspect any of the conclusions?

**Mr McGuinty:** Anticipate.

**Dr Offord:** Anticipate. Yes, I think some of our findings are in line certainly with other studies.

**Mr McGuinty:** I am reminded of the time in grade 7 when I was asked to suggest an experiment in science and this is the one I came up with: I said, "I want to take the wings off a bee to see if it will affect its ability to fly."

Believe me, I am not casting aspersions on your report, but the Coleman report commissioned by the US Senate about 30 years ago, the most comprehensive study of education ever in North America, came to the conclusion that the single most determining factor influencing the child's behaviour in school and his development is not whether the child has black greenboards or green blackboards, not class size, not teacher qualifications, not open classes but the disposition towards learning which the child brings from the home to the school. You verified it in terms of figures.

Having had the good experience of being raised in abject poverty—my family moved from the farm in abject poverty. They kept moving, but I kept finding them. What your survey

does, and I appreciate it and I admire it, but anyone who had the good experience—and I say "good." Perhaps because of the law of contrariety, I was able to break out of it. This is little more than a profound grasp of the obvious.

**Dr Offord:** I do not understand why it is so obvious. What is so obvious about it?

**Mr McGuinty:** Because it does not take extensive scientific investigation and analysis—you verify it with this kind of scientific accuracy—to anticipate conduct disorder, hyperactivity, emotional disorder. First of all, it is more apparent to the teacher. That is so obvious it does not need statement, because parents invariably are less inclined to admit or even to determine or to see, or they are not qualified to see these things. The hyperactivity and conduct disorder: Anyone who has gone to grade school in a poor section can look back and see the number of kids with whom he started grade school in a poor district and the number who completed it and went on to the high school.

You verified it in terms of figures and I thank you for having done it. It will serve a very useful purpose, but I think one of the problems we have today is that the common sense of other days is uncommon sense today.

**Dr Offord:** Let me just respond. Clearly there is importance and limits to the cross-section reporting that I have done. What we have done in the first stage here is simply to indicate the extent of disadvantage in the various areas for economically disadvantaged children in the province. I think that is important to do. What you find, which has not been as apparent as before—it may be apparent to you on a clinical basis, but anybody could say: "Your experience is very specialized. Does it apply across Ontario?"—is the fact that when you take a random sample across Ontario, these kids are disadvantaged in several dimensions.

The more interesting point is why. What are the mechanisms by which that happens? The fact is that it does not occur with all poor children and it also occurs in middle-class homes. So the next thing we are dealing with—I am trying to present some initial data today—is to figure out the mechanisms by which that happens, because it hits only certain kids. So I put to you that economic disadvantage is a marker, a risk indicator for all sorts of bad things among poor kids, but we do not know which poor kids are going to get it.

**Mr McGuinty:** That is right.

**Dr Offord:** Until we know that, we will not know exactly what to do to improve things.

**Mr McGuinty:** I have one final comment.

**The Chair:** I do feel we should be asking questions.

**Mr McGuinty:** Do you suspect, Dr Offord, as on academic to another—

**Mr Neumann:** Madam Chair, I object.

**Mr McGuinty:** —that the same problems are to be found in the children of the wealthy as in the poor?

**Dr Offord:** Yes, the same problems are to be found. It looks as if they may be found for the same reasons, but the fact is that the prevalence is much greater among poor kids.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Dr Offord. I would like to go on to the next questioner.

**Mr Villeneuve:** These are most interesting statistics. I see the cross-section survey was done in a large community. Are we talking about a large urban area or is this a cross-section of rural and urban people?

**Dr Offord:** This is a random sample of children 4 to 16 across Ontario, a completely random, unselected sample across the province.

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**Mr Villeneuve:** I would tend to think that the economic background certainly has some bearing, but also the environment. I think we would have fewer problems, possibly, in small-town or rural Ontario than in some of our larger metropolitan centres. Could you just comment on that a little bit? I do not think it is strictly economics. I think there is more to it than that.

**Dr Offord:** I just want to make a distinction. The economics are a marker; they are a risk indicator for these things. What part it plays in the causation is not as clear, so there may be other mediating factors by which this happens. One may be the urban environment; that is one possibility. Disturbed families, etc., are other possibilities.

What we found in general, if you look across the province at children growing up in communities of over 25,000 population, is that they tend to have more psychiatric disorders than other kids, even when you control for income. There is something about the urban environment, in addition to the fact that there may be poorer pockets there, that pushes these kids towards psychiatric disorder. The issue we found was that teachers in urban schools see these kids as much harder to handle than the teachers in rural schools.

What our survey cannot tell us is whether these kids in urban schools indeed do kick up more or the fact that the urban teachers are less tolerant of children. So I want to distinguish between economic disadvantage as a risk indicator and as a causative factor. We are clear on the first; it is a risk indicator. But your point is quite germane. How does this indicator work? We do not know as much as we would like to about that, and other factors are clearly involved.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** Not knowing enough about your process, my questions come down to control around notions of teacher identification and class bias in teacher identification. A great number of us have huge fears that special education is being used as a dumping ground and a streaming ground for poor kids. Can you explain to me a little bit about how these identifications took place and whether these are professionally verified by psychiatrists, or are these Statistics Canada figures which you tried to correlate? From looking at the tables I cannot tell whether these are clean or skewed.

**Dr Offord:** I think the way we did the survey was that the kids were selected at random. Then for those who were selected, the parents filled out a checklist on them about their behaviour in the last six months, and the teachers filled out a checklist on them. We then had to convert these checklist scores into some meaningful psychiatric diagnoses. We did that by having 250 of these kids interviewed by child psychiatrists. So the gold standard, in a sense, to the diagnosis we made based on the checklist information is the diagnosis made by child psychiatrists.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** There were 250 out of 3,000.

**Dr Offord:** One point, why teachers identify more poor kids as having these problems, this survey cannot answer. They

clearly do. To what extent that is a bias and to what extent that refers to the actual situation we do not know.

#### NATIONAL ANTI-POVERTY ORGANIZATION

**The Chair:** May I have Havi Echenberg from the National Anti-Poverty Coalition. You have already received Ms Echenberg's presentation in the white folder. I am going to ask you to be as brief as possible, although I do want to give you the 30 minutes that was allotted to you in the beginning. Would you please begin.

**Ms Echenberg:** I have just a couple of things. The presentation is not in those kits. All that is in there is background information on what the organization is. The name of it is the National Anti-Poverty Organization, not coalition.

**The Chair:** I am sorry.

**Ms Echenberg:** That is okay. It was wrong on the list.

**The Chair:** Yes, I have unfortunately been given the wrong information. Are you going to hand out your brief?

**Ms Echenberg:** I cannot.

**The Chair:** We will depend on Hansard then.

**Ms Echenberg:** I did a quick check and understood that by today you would have heard a fair amount of the numbers around hunger and poverty that were Ontario-specific. I do not want to spend a lot of time on numbers, but to put it into a national context, depending on whose numbers and what base lines you use and how you calculate it, there are between 3.5 million and 4.2 million poor people in Canada. Most of the numbers, no matter how they are measured, indicate that either one in five or one in six of them are children.

I understand that you heard yesterday the Ontario numbers from the national Hungercount. The national numbers are that there were 1.3 million different users of food programs and that one in four of them were children. That gives you a sense of the national experience.

The whole area of hunger and food banks is one that NAPO has been involved in, I think, as long as it has existed although it did not appear as a separately articulated issue until the National Hunger Conference and a number of other things very specific to it appeared. When I came into the National Anti-Poverty Organization in 1986, I found food banks on the list of priority issues that the board had decided we were to do something about, but when I talked to them and asked what it was we were to do about them, no one was quite sure.

What I discovered fairly quickly is that NAPO and its low-income activist directors from across the country had the same ambivalence about food banks as the users do and in some cases were users. We may get back to that.

The hunger issue as distinct from the food bank issue is something that has certainly cropped up in all of the work that we have done in the three and a half years that I have been involved with the organization. One of the first things we did, I guess in 1987, was a community-based literature review on health inequity as part of the Achieving Health for All research coming out of the federal government.

We looked at literature produced by community-based health organizations and low-income organizations whose specific interest was not health. We were looking for how the community identified the health inequities that resulted from poverty. There were three that were identified. One of them was basically the occupational health and safety stuff, but not just around the workplace; also around the home. The other two



were more directly pertinent to the issue at hand today. The most commonly mentioned one was hunger and malnutrition and the second most common one was stress. What was interesting about the stress one is that it was described by low-income people in the context of being unable to provide adequate nutrition and food for their children and the stress that resulted from that.

We have also run into hunger issues more recently as we have started to undertake a fairly major research project on the links between illiteracy and poverty. Inevitably, when you start to look at illiteracy, you get into the education system, and when you get into the education system hunger is continually identified, both by parents and kids, as an obstacle in the learning process.

I was listening to Nancy say earlier that the problem was newer here. I do not think the problem of hunger is newer here; I think the way it has been articulated is different than it was in the United States. The soup kitchens and church pantries that she described, as far as I know, have been around in Canadian cities for ever, at least since the Depression and probably before. They existed basically for crisis transition, for families that were burnt out or flooded out, or for a sudden death in the family in a low-income community—those kinds of things. They existed as a fairly ongoing support for people who were homeless in the context of the days when, generally speaking, that was not because there was not housing that was affordable.

Social assistance levels, I think, have historically been below the poverty line, but prior to the recession in 1980 what we had were children who were fed and parents who were hungry. I think what has changed since the 1980s is that now you have both. I think the recession in the early 1980s basically just meant that there was so much community drive to respond to their neighbours' need that the food supplier said, "Can you people please get your act together?" and hence food banks. I really think it was that simple, if you track it back in most cities. The major grocery store chains were saying: "Look, we are getting requests from 30 of you. Can you people please sit down and talk to each other." They did, and hence food banking. I think something shifted in 1980.

As someone who spends most of my time in Ontario, I have to tell you that I think the recession ended only in southern Ontario. Other than that, the recession in this country has continued. There have been two or three other cities that seem to have some pretty vibrant growth, but by and large nothing has caught up since 1980 in most of the country, including social assistance rates and minimum wages. They did start to be reindexed in most provinces to the cost of living in about 1984, but on the social assistance side they never caught up that four-year gap. On the minimum wage side, it is not even doing that well.

1130

I think a few things have changed through the 1980s. Housing is the big one. I am in Toronto so I know that I do not need to talk about it a lot. I do want to say that I do not think it is accidental that housing is an issue not just in Toronto but in other provinces and that it comes at the end of five or six years of decreasing commitment from the federal government to the social housing supply. I think that has been a problem outside Ontario. To my knowledge there are no initiatives that are being undertaken without federal dollars.

As I understand it, by and large the supply side in Ontario is drying up as well; Project 3000 was all we could expect. I think things will get worse on that side. Again, with the exception of Ontario, social assistance rates, if anything, are barely keeping

up with inflation. Here, I am not sure they are a lot further ahead of inflation than they were in 1980, if in fact they are ahead at all.

I want to go back briefly to food banks and food programs. I do not think food banks and food programs are a solution to hunger any more than the Salvation Army can solve the housing crisis. They are a crisis response. They do not solve the problem. They are obviously based on a charity model, and inevitably with a charity model the people who are giving feel a whole lot better than the people who are receiving, which is not to suggest for a moment that they are not well-intentioned and they are not important. They are feeding people who would otherwise, at least in the short term, be hungry.

I have used the analogy before, and it was deliberately provocative but I do not think it is all that farfetched, that at least some users of food banks or soup kitchens or whatever you want to call them feel about the food bank the way battered women feel about their husbands on payday. You are mighty glad that they are there with the paycheque but you are not very happy about having to rely on it.

Just to respond in a way to something Nancy said about school food programs, I think we have seen in this country examples of how different they can be. Certainly my board has some serious reservations about school food programs because they see them as another place where any kind of control is being taken away from them. What their kids get fed, when they get fed and how they get fed is one more thing that is being taken away.

Has anyone here heard about sharing shelves? This is something that just makes my skin crawl. In a lot of classrooms these days, at the back of the classroom there is a shelf that is called the sharing shelf. Anyone who does not want part of his lunch, or is not going to eat it, gets to leave it there and someone else goes to get it, can take it. It is called the sharing shelf.

**Mr McGuinty:** I would have appreciated that in my day.

**Ms Echenberg:** There are problems. I am not saying people are not hungry and they do not need the food. I am just suggesting to you that it would not be my way of solving hunger.

**Mr McGuinty:** It is humiliating.

**Ms Echenberg:** The other extreme, perhaps, is in Vancouver. The introduction of school food programs has been done by low-income communities with them in control. They have learned a great deal about organizing and about how to work with their school boards, unions, teachers' associations, and home and school associations. They have formed some quite remarkable alliances and I think have managed to do a food program of which they feel that they have not lost control and that it is something where they have taken the lead and it has been theirs. I would suggest that if you are going to look at school food programs that is the model that I think most low-income people would prefer to see followed.

Perhaps I could stop there.

**The Chair:** I think the presenter is having difficulty without our full attention. Is that all you would like to present at the moment?

**Ms Echenberg:** I will stop.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** As we come to the second day and the last day of hearings on this in this new format that we have here for dealing with private members' initiatives to the opposition parties, primarily, I know we are going to hear more description

of the situation, but I for one do not need an awful lot more description. I guess I need to get some advice, and the committee needs some advice, it seems to me, on what we should be doing in terms of this kind of committee's role in proposing solutions. We are not the government; we are just a committee of the Legislature.

We have the Transitions report out there. We have a number of examples that you might be able to give us from other parts of the country of things that you think are particularly useful. I am wondering what advice you have for us. Should we be setting some targets over the next period of time for how we should be dealing with food banks and the hunger question and how we should be bringing in Transitions? Can we have some suggestions as to what kind of recommendations you think should come out of the committee.

**Ms Echenberg:** I am not familiar with this particular committee model, but I think your report in itself is important: what kinds of issues you flag, how you describe it and how you frame the issue. I agree with the people who have been up here before you. Money is the big issue; money is not the only issue. I think it is certainly the first step. We have seen some steps taken along that line with the Social Assistance Review Committee report, but I think there are other pieces to it, the housing issue and continuing to both construct social housing and put some time and energy into doing things about discrimination in the existing housing market so that low-income people are not excluded and can get access to what is there. I think all those things are important and the report itself has a certain momentum. Depending on where it is distributed and who gets their hands on it, it has a ripple effect. So I would start by saying that.

In terms of targets, I wish I could hear what some of the food banks and food distribution people were saying, because it is obviously an issue across the country that they are grappling with. Should they be spending their energy trying to meet the demand, which seems to have ups and downs depending on the economic flow? I think chances are that we are not headed into good economic times and the need is going to rise again. Should they devote some of their extremely stretched resources to trying to diminish the demand as opposed to increasing the supply? They have been doing some of that with advocacy work, the public education work.

To me it is fairly simple. SARC needs to proceed. That is not going to be easy in light of the federal budget changes, which we will do our part about in Ottawa, I hope. I think social housing construction—not just affordable housing ownership, which is the next stage of the government, but the affordable rental housing piece—has to continue.

I think there needs to be some work done in the education system. I know that the witness prior to me was understandably concerned about being careful about what he talked about and what had been demonstrated and what was not, but like you, Richard, I think there is inevitably class bias in teachers. It does not surprise me that children are not doing well in the school system. I talk to these kids and their parents and they feel like they are in a foreign land when they are in the school system a lot of the time. I think there is some education work to do there. I think teachers are well-intentioned and I think we need to do some work with them. I think that is a recommendation that can be carried through.

Those are the immediate ones. It is going to take a lot.

**Mr Neumann:** I was interested in your comments on the minimum wage. Have you done any study and comparison on

how much has been eroded through inflation across Canada and in Ontario? How significant is the issue of the working poor to food banks from your perspective?

**Ms Echenberg:** I do not have the minimum wage numbers with me. They have been done. The National Council of Welfare has done them. They show a pretty steady erosion, not surprisingly.

In terms of the importance of the issue of the working poor, "Increasingly important" is the answer. For once I am really excited about an Economic Council of Canada report. They just did a report called Good Jobs, Bad Jobs. We have been talking about good jobs and bad jobs for a decade and people have been saying, "What are you talking about?" and pulling out data. What they are showing is that since 1980, 50 per cent of the jobs that have been created in this country are bad jobs—by their definition, not mine.

They are not permanent, they are not secure, they are minimum wage, and they are part-time. They are not jobs on which people can support themselves, much less families, with any economic security. In Ontario we are seeing more and more of that. We are seeing the industrial base erode and the knowledge and service base expand. That means bad jobs and that means more working-poor people. Two minimum wage incomes cannot keep a family of four at the poverty line in this city. That is a reality. We have got to a point where we have accepted that two people working full-time somehow can do that and still be poor and we are going to live with that.

I do not see a lot of attention—I have not read SARC in detail, so it may be there and I apologize if it is—about how you deal with that on an ongoing basis. What are we going to do? Are we going to subsidize wages? Are we going to subsidize incomes? If we are going to subsidize wages, are we going to do it through the minimum wage or are we going to do it through the social service system? Or are we just going to let people work and still be poor, which I think is not what any of us want and yet that is the social reality that we are all living with?

**Mr Neumann:** And how to strike the right balance that does not discourage the formation of new business and the creation of good jobs.

1140

**Ms Echenberg:** Exactly. I guess what we have said consistently is that we would like to see governments committed in principle, just to start with, to the notion that people who are working full-time should not be poor. We cannot even get the principle stated anywhere so far. We need to have all of the players sitting down, and by that I mean unions and big business and small business and nonunionized workers and people who are already outside the workforce now, people from cultural minorities and people with disabilities and single parents. They need to be sitting down and saying: "What are we going to do with the policymakers? How are we going to deal with this?" Because it is just going to keep getting worse, from everything we can see. This whole increasing competitiveness internationally means more and more downward pressure on wages, a more flexible workplace, and a more flexible labour force. All of that means less reliable and secure incomes.

**Mr Allen:** I have, first, a quick intervention on that last point. I had legislative research do a survey of recent research on the impacts of major increases in minimum wages, and those studies show that there is no conclusive evidence anywhere that indicates there is a negative economic impact with major in-



creases in the minimum wage, with the small exception that possibly there is a slight indication that teenagers working on minimum wage jobs might find their task a little bit more difficult in finding such a job. But that is the only small negative indicator. I have that study and copies of it. I should bring it down and make copies available for members of the committee, because I think it is relevant.

We have heard a little testimony about, "Yes, low income is a significant indicator, but there are some other things about being on welfare and so on that we do not know too much about and that is the causes of why low income makes kids perhaps have problems of one kind and another." It may lead us to think that perhaps we should not move on the income intervention side.

Also, on the question of whether there is class bias in Offord's study, one could say maybe we should take his conclusions with a grain of salt until we sort out whether the teachers who did the indicating are reflecting middle-class bias in the classroom and the schools are not appropriate places for those kids in any case, so that is the problem. How significant for you is immediate income intervention in terms of the problems that we have been dealing with and the negative morbidity and all that stuff?

**Ms Echenberg:** I will restate it. It is always the starting place, always. It has some pretty direct relationships, before you get into other things. I spend quite a lot of my time with single moms and low-income activists across this country, which not a lot of people get a chance to do; I understand that. I talk to them for various reasons in varying circumstances.

I spent some time last summer talking to women who were in training programs. Being in these training programs, depending on which province they were in, they were worse off economically than they had been on social assistance, which is the irony of how these things get administered. They were incredible because they were dealing with less money and fewer choices and yet it was in the process of trying to get to a place where they would have more autonomy. In the interim they did not have the income they needed to support them being in those class rows to make that transition. It was just phenomenally complicated, and it was basically because if someone had given them another \$50 a month it would have been a piece of cake.

It was literally that simple. One of them in saying that to a social worker who had said, "Well, you know you are making a mountain out of a molehill," responded with: "You call it a molehill; I will call it a mountain. It is a week's food." I should point out that You Call it a Molehill became the title of our report because we just liked it so much. But that was a \$50-a-month difference; income is pretty basic—if you can do that piece, giving people some place to make some decisions, to care for their families, to reduce the stress so that they can actually start to put in place the other things which are often in the community, but there are just too many obstacles for people to get to them. So income is number one.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms Echenberg, for giving us the Canadian perspective.

#### TORONTO CHILDREN'S BREAKFAST CLUB

**The Chair:** May I have Mr Gosling from the Toronto Children's Breakfast Club. Mr Gosling, I have allotted 15 minutes for your presentation and any questions we may have. I hope you will be able to accommodate.

**Mr Gosling:** I was going to give some letters but I will just leave them at the end here.

My name is Richard Gosling, I am the manager of the recreation department for Metropolitan Toronto Housing Authority and also the president of the Toronto Children's Breakfast Club. I had originally come with a pile of letters here from principals of schools across Metro which were endorsing the need for the program, but I do not really think I need to do that after hearing the previous speakers.

I have listed a number of the problems that people are experiencing right across the city. Underfed children are listless, they are short of attention spans, all of these different things that you have all heard all the way along.

Our program started in 1984. I was working actually as a social worker, a community relations worker, in one of our communities and the truancy rate was extremely high. So I sat down with a principal and said, "How are we going to resolve this?" We came up with the idea of having a breakfast club for the children so that they would come off to school with a positive outlook for the day. We started at one morning a week using Katimavik volunteers, which was the federally run program, and after about five or six weeks we sat down and tried to do a review of the program. We were only serving six or seven children daily. But there was one little boy who attended once a week and he ate 26 pancakes at a sitting and we said, "You know, even if we are serving only this child, there is a need for this program."

We went from there and what happened was, as soon as we opened it up five days a week, we ended up with 50 children a day at that one location. We were working hand to mouth, using the foot patrol police department to identify ourselves to local businesses and soliciting donations, and we thought we would get the mayor of the city involved. At that time Mr Curling was the Minister of Housing and we needed some funding, so we had the mayor come out as a celebrity chef. Out of need comes these great ideas. We had all the press and everybody there to see Mr Lastman serving breakfast to these children and he squashed it. He said, "Listen, if I am elected as mayor, you come back and see me and give me an approximate budget that you would need to run this program."

Needless to say, he was elected and we talked about where the program could be used elsewhere in the city of North York and we came up with, originally, five locations. With the assistance of Mr Curling—at the time, there was one third funding that came from the Ministry of Housing, one third was committed from the city of North York and one third from the board of education and that arrangement has continued in the city of North York.

The budget that we came up with, though, was not just for a government-run program. We felt very strongly that there had to be dignity in the program and that we never wanted to see it be a soup kitchen where there would be somebody sitting there with a hair net serving out food. So we came up with a budget that would hire a resident from the immediate community to be there and to serve the breakfast to the children, but also to do much more: to make sure that they were properly dressed; to make sure that they had a good outlook for the day.

The majority of our families—about 60 per cent—are single moms, and many of them head off to work early in the morning so there are a number of factors involved here. These women are headed off to work and they are the working poor. They leave their children and try to do the best they can, ensuring that they have set out a meal or those kinds of things. We were afraid also that they would be injured or hurt trying to prepare their own meals as well. This is how the program got going. As I say, we take on a number of things.

Our program is called the Toronto Children's Breakfast Club because we do a number of things. We have arts and crafts. We make sure the kids have fun. We have a logo which is being drawn up, which is on our brochure here. By the way, a nutritious breakfast is served. That is why I say it is very difficult for us and it is the front-line people, the principals, as I say, who see the benefits of our program. I am going to leave these letters endorsing the need for this kind of program.

1150

We never sell ourselves as a feeding program. I was at the hunger conference out in Alberta in the spring and a number of the provinces are looking at this problem. I know that in Regina, Saskatoon and even Vancouver, the model that the previous speaker spoke about, they think that our model is very workable; it gives the community power. There has to be an advisory board of residents who oversee the day-to-day operation of the breakfast club program. They have responsibilities to do fund-raisers on a weekly basis. It is limited. Of the 30 clubs across Metropolitan Toronto, 26 of them are no longer requiring the \$60 food allotment that was given to them. They have been able to generate that amount of money weekly from fund-raising activities and games and activities that the kids participate in.

I think I need to stress, though, at this time that the majority of our food comes from the food banks, the Daily Bread Food Bank, North York Harvest Food Bank and others. Without them, we could not exist. The problem that we have is that the food banks are unable to give us the quality and quantity of food we require. Food fluctuates. Sometimes we have a real surge and we are very fortunate to have fresh produce and things like that available for the children, but there are dips. We are going through dips now when the food banks are not able to provide the kinds and quality of food that we require, and so our kids are not being served as well as they should be.

We serve in excess of 1,500 children daily and we actually have been requested by public health to work with them in a couple of areas with seniors. So we have breakfast clubs that serve seniors. Again, they work on the same concept. They come down and the seniors are able to cook and participate.

That is something I did not touch on. The fact is that ours is not a soup kitchen, it is more like an extended family. If you walk into our breakfast club it has a real feeling of warmth and the children all have a role. It is not a restaurant where they come through the door and say, "Hey, eggs and bacon," or whatever; there is a set menu. Right down to the little ones, they have to participate in it on a daily basis, like setting up chairs, even helping the little ones serve and cut their food and those kinds of things. It is a nice atmosphere. As I say, the food is sort of secondary, it is never really stressed; it is more the homy atmosphere that is stressed.

Maybe I should just stop there, if there are any questions.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** I have been impressed by the program for a long time and once made it out early enough to be able to cook. I know the area. But, my God, it is difficult with a young family. Anyway, we dealt with this as well in the select committee on education; some of the problems with the Education Act not being able to provide money through the boards in an appropriate way. I hope our committee will actually make some recommendations on that in that circumstance.

One of the things I have wondered about is that this works not badly in the homogenous community of a Metro Toronto Housing Authority, if I can put it that way, where the whole community has got some major income problems within it. I am

wondering if you can talk a little bit about how the model can work in those areas where the hunger is hidden, where a small percentage of people in the school are poor as compared with a major affluent group. How do you then do these community-controlled kinds of models and things without the identification problems for the poor family?

**Mr Gosling:** We actually operate out of four schools. As you are aware, the majority of them are in Metro housing areas. We are just going into Greenholme Public School, which does not just service MTHA residents. That is the thing that we continue to stress with the principal, that it is not just the feeding program. It is child care, child supervision and, by the way, the food is served.

In Oakville, they set up a breakfast club in the bottom of a church. We are in the process right now of working with the separate school board to assist them. They have identified Cardinal Carter who is working with us to identify. I think eight areas at this point have been set up and we are helping them to set up models. I know that a couple of them are in the basements of churches. So that is one model. The kids go there and they participate in the breakfast club program. That is why it is so important to have something other than the food being done, that the care and the activities are our main emphasis.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** We looked at a model which would link the preschool day care in the school with this kind of a program.

**Mr Gosling:** We have moms and tots locations that we fund and the moms and tots staff, and the children come down to participate in the breakfast club program and then the children just stay on as well. So we have five locations where that is presently happening.

**Mr Allen:** I am very pleased that you have come, Richard, to tell us about this very, very impressive program. The question I have is how much are you at risk, how fragile is the program in terms of the sources of food supply?

**Mr Gosling:** We are very poor, very fragile.

**Mr Allen:** What recommendations, therefore, would you have for how we get you built in in a much more effective fashion on an ongoing basis? Then, on the other side, are there risks in going this route?

**Mr Gosling:** We need more government assistance, that is for sure, and we need commitment from the government that there will be moneys available for food. The food banks are unable to provide it, as I say, on a regular basis. We are relying as well on the different marketing boards. For example, the egg marketing board supports us. We have had support from the North York school board and this year for the first time the Metro tee-off program is actually helping to fund the luncheon program at Park Public School, but we need that kind of government support for food.

The breakfast clubs have a lot of pride. The advisory boards and things like that do do a certain amount of fund-raising. We have one club that is totally independent now. Different businesses have adopted the club and it is totally independent, able to operate. But the one hitch there is that it operates out of a school, so they are able to rely on their insurance and their liability in order to operate. A club or organization, if it was to operate outside of either housing or the government in some form like that, would need some kind of assistance for insurance as well.



**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr Gosling. Father Tom Day, please.

Perhaps I may just mention, as Father Day is coming forward, that we have a decision to make regarding tomorrow and I would like to do that right now, if I could. Tomorrow morning Queen's Park is officially meeting the Governor General. The Governor General is going to be welcomed at Queen's Park at 11 o'clock. That may or may not interfere with what we want to do. We want to have a subcommittee meeting. Some of you may want to attend that, so I would suggest we have the subcommittee meeting from 10 to 11. Since it is going to take place right outside this room, we will be right there. And then we begin at 1:30 tomorrow afternoon to hear—

**Mr Villeneuve:** That is Thursday.

**The Chair:** I am very sorry. It is Thursday I am talking to now, at 1:30. Sudbury agreed to come and then we could go into the considerations. So that is what I am suggesting right now: 10 o'clock Thursday morning for the subcommittee meeting ending before 11; 1:30 to 1:45, a hearing from Sudbury Soup Kitchen and then beginning our report at 1:45 on Thursday afternoon. This will take place in committee room 2 since we do not need to have the facilities of this room and we are not having hearings.

**Mr Jackson:** It would be a lot more convenient for me if we had our subcommittee meeting from, say, 11 until 12 on Thursday. It is my daughter's birthday and Taras Shevchenko Day and I will not be here at 10.

**The Chair:** Could we make it 11:30 then and leave the ceremonies? There may be some people who want to—

**Mr Jackson:** I am talking about Thursday, 8 March.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** Is it Wednesday or Thursday that His Excellency is here?

**The Chair:** Thursday.

**Mr Jackson:** Thursday; okay.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** Somehow I just did not schedule it.

**The Chair:** Should we start at 11:30 then?

**Mr Jackson:** It is just a subcommittee meeting.

**The Chair:** We are going to have to compete with the 21-gun salute and this kind of stuff if we proceed at 11. If you want to meet at 11:30, I think it will be easier.

**Mr Jackson:** 11:30 will be fine.

**The Chair:** 11:30 to 12:30 then, if any of you want to set anything up over the lunch hour.

1200

## ST PAUL'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

**The Chair:** Okay. I am very sorry, Father Day. We have these little things to fix up from time to time regarding our plans for the future. So if you would like to begin, 15 minutes have been allocated for your presentation and questions.

**Father Day:** Good morning, everyone. Thank you for inviting me to speak to you on this pressing social matter of hunger that has presented itself to our communities.

I believe that the many statistics concerning hunger that have been compiled in the past have been, and will be, conveyed to you in these hearings. So I believe that a good source

of information that I could make available to you at this time would be the service that our community of St Paul's is trying to give to our neighbourhood of Carleton Street to the north, Lake Ontario to the south, Sherbourne Street to the west and the Don River to the east.

I might add here that I was overjoyed at the announcement of the Metro council and Toronto Board of Education to declare this week as End Hunger Week. Even though the Metropolitan Separate School Board, for which I am a trustee, is not part of this declaration, I assure you we do concur with this declaration.

I am overjoyed with this announcement as we finally have elected officials publicly stating that we actually do have a problem of hunger and poverty in our city of Toronto. The first step in solving a problem is to first admit and believe that you have a problem. So with this being said, let me now proceed to outline the solutions that our community of St Paul has embarked upon.

The poor have always been present within the St Paul community. Through our St Vincent de Paul society we have assisted the less fortunate with food and clothing, as well as trying to obtain affordable housing for over 130 years. I have been at St Paul's Catholic Church for going on three years. When I first came to the parish, we were helping in the vicinity of 200 families a month with food on a regular basis. That has continued to climb in the past two years to our now regularly helping in the vicinity of 700 families a month. Within these 700 families we are helping well over 2,000 children with dry food, which is picked up in the basement of the church and food that is prepared in their homes. Twenty-five per cent of subsidized housing in the city of Toronto is located in our parish community.

We receive our food from the Daily Bread Food Bank and are open three days a week. We operate with seven volunteer workers and one paid worker. We have approximately 900 families on our card system. We also visit the homes of everyone we help and hence there is no doubt in our minds that over 95 per cent of the people we help are in dire need of food assistance. I might add that when the Daily Bread Food Bank runs low on basic-need food, I have appealed to other Catholic parish communities who immediately responded to our need.

I would like now to move on to another solution that our parish community has seen fit at this time to proceed with. Approximately a year ago we recognized a need of many children within our community who were coming to school without having a proper, nutritious breakfast. So we began a breakfast club for elementary school children in the basement of St Paul's Church. The club is operated by the Society of St Vincent de Paul under the name of the Cardinal Carter Breakfast Club and in conjunction also with the Metropolitan Separate School Board.

I think it is important to understand how we recognized the need for a breakfast club. Absolute evidence of need for a breakfast club-like operation is difficult to determine. Surveys of the children involved, even if conducted in secret, are not reliable as children will often respond in ways to protect their family, especially their mothers. Also, the method of presentation of such surveys, the predisposition of a school principal or a particular pastor or community executive to such projects may impact on the presentation of needs data.

A summary of the sources of information in any particular parish or community are as follows: from the teacher we can get information such as are the children alert in class? What are the consumption characteristics of children at mid-morning

snack time? Some of them can really eat a lot an hour after they have had breakfast. What is the quality of work done by the children? How many single-parent children are in the class? The number of children in subsidized housing. What are the local community housing standards and income in the area? How many use food banks in the area on a regular basis? We have that information, for example, through the St Vincent de Paul society or the Daily Bread Food Bank. In short, intrinsic and unequivocal evidence will be hard to come by, but the parish priest, the Society of St Vincent de Paul, the school principal and teacher will generate a pretty clear picture of the needs meriting a closer inspection.

I find it good to look at some arguments presented against breakfast clubs such as the following: parents have a responsibility to feed their children; children who already have a good breakfast at home will use the breakfast club; families will become less capable of looking after themselves if this is provided; the weaker children will pull down the stronger children if the group that did not need the breakfast uses it; people should be encouraged to become more self-sufficient, and there are better ways to ensure children are fed by ensuring that there is food in the home.

De facto, some children in the less affluent neighbourhoods are much better off by virtue of the breakfast club. They do not go hungry. They are more open to learning. The weaker children benefit from associating with the stronger, much more than the other way around. Experience indicates that the stronger—that is, those who are physically, mentally and emotionally stronger—contribute a better atmosphere at the breakfast club. The so-called needier children are not tagged as poor kids, so there is no disgrace to the family because they use the club.

Finally, many single parents work, and this assists them greatly. In fact, these breakfast clubs definitely fulfil a real need in a very effective way. Hence, we are expanding our breakfast clubs throughout the city and the archdiocese of Toronto. We have four open now and we probably will look to 10, 15, 20 more, whatever, very quickly. The St Paul's school principal reports a significant improvement in the children's behaviour and scholastic achievement after having had a good, nutritious breakfast. We have 60 to 110 children a day coming to our breakfast club, out of about 220 children who go to the school.

I have tried in my presentation to point out to you that the phenomenon of expanding food banks in Ontario at a time of general prosperity is a reality. Food banks historically have been a result of a depression, hence leading to the question, when will the expansion end?

Whose responsibility is it to feed the hungry? Can we leave it to chance of a caring community? It is surely not charity that we are talking about here; we are talking about justice, as Cardinal Carter recently stated. At this point in time, it is evident that food banks and breakfast clubs are not a short-term emergency measure but will be with us for decades to come.

I remain immensely grateful to you for your kind invitation to come to speak to you today. Your obvious concern about the plight of the hungry is a sign of hope.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** What are the times for your breakfast club? What time does it start? What time does it end?

**Father Day:** It is 7:30 in the morning and nine o'clock.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** I was wondering about the linkage between the school and the church in terms of the decision to hold it in the church basement rather than in the school and

some tie-in with preschool day care. Is there some kind of preschool day care at St Paul's school?

**Father Day:** No, we do not have preschool day care. The children can be dropped off by the parents, and some do that at the church basement. It was a convenience. We had a breakfast room and a kitchen kind of all set up there with a little bit of renovation that we had. It was just nicely located there. Many schools are not beside churches and those schools were having to do renovations. I do not know where the school board is going to get the money for that, but I have a few things up my sleeve for that.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** What about the public schools? There are a couple of elementary public schools in your area as well.

**Father Day:** Park school is just up the road.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** Park has one, right?

**Father Day:** They have a breakfast club.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** And Regent Park.

**Father Day:** I do not think Regent Park does, because I know we have some children who attend Regent Park school come to our breakfast club.

**Mr Allen:** First of all, do you have the same sense of fragility and problem of supply? I gather from what I heard that you depend also on the Daily Bread Food Bank for your basic supplies for the program. Does that make you nervous in any respect given (a) the fluctuation of supply that is there and (b) the nature of the food supply balance may not always be appropriate or whatever?

**Father Day:** Yes. I beg for money. When the food bank runs short of the basic needs—for example, peanut butter or other things that you need, or bread or milk—then we go buy that. We have money and we go buy that. We are trying to set up a mechanism. I do not know what we are going to need to run all these breakfast clubs. St Paul's is going to pick up some of the budget for them. The school board cannot pay any money for food; it is not its mandate. For the rest, we are going to try to set up a mechanism of begging for money that will be coming in on a regular basis so that it will be able to supplement each.

1210

**Mr Allen:** How would you prefer to see that supply problem and your income problem handled? Do you have any recommendations in that regard? We have had a suggestion that possibly the Education Act might be amended.

**Father Day:** I guess it would maybe depend where the responsibility for feeding the people of our community lies. Who has that responsibility? The community does, but what part? As I said here, to leave it to the chance of having a caring community is not very good. There has to be found a source more stable than that. It will be up to yourselves to come up with an answer to that question. My principle is, if children are hungry, feed them.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** What about changing the compensatory education grant formula to allow boards to pass through money for boards for food?

**Father Day:** That certainly is a solution that could be very good. I do not know. Staff would have to look at all the—

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** Of course, it would be a 100 per cent pass-through, as all other provincial initiative programs are.



**Mr D. W. Smith:** You have made some pretty astounding statements in your presentation, Father Day, but does Cardinal Carter really sincerely believe that this is going to go on for decades? I ask that because it would appear to me that if the people who are volunteering now thought they were coming to the end of an era and that maybe we do not have to do this any longer, they might be able to carry on for a while. But if a statement like that made by a gentleman who was quite worldly, I suppose—

**Father Day:** It is not the cardinal's statement; it is mine.

**Mr D. W. Smith:** Oh, I thought it stated, "Cardinal Carter recently stated."

**Father Day:** No, that follows on page 3, "justice."

**Mr D. W. Smith:** Oh, I am sorry.

**Father Day:** We are talking about justice; the Cardinal said "justice."

**Mr D. W. Smith:** I guess somebody really believes then that this is going to go on for a long, long time yet.

**Father Day:** I made the statement that if things continue on as they are at the present time, with the increase from the 200 families we are helping out to 700 families in two years, if this whole trend continues, then let's be well assured we are going to have food banks and breakfast clubs here for a long, long time. Other people are going to give you statistics, but real, drastic changes have to be made in how people are going to be fed. They are not being fed food; that is the fact. So if things are not changed, this is going to continue on. As things stand now, there is no change. So things will continue on.

**Mr D. W. Smith:** What would these 700 families a month cost you in real dollars?

**Father Day:** We were talking about that yesterday. I do not know, \$60,000?

**Mr D. W. Smith:** A month?

**Father Day:** No, a year; \$60,000 to \$70,000 a year, easy. Maybe more. Probably more.

#### TORONTO BOARD OF HEALTH FOOD COUNCIL IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

**The Chair:** Fiona Nelson, please. Fiona is wearing the Toronto Board of Health Food Council hat today.

**Ms Nelson:** I am very pleased to be here on behalf of the Toronto Board of Health and the food policy implementation council. It seems appropriate to be here at lunchtime, where we have a choice of forgoing lunch, unlike the people we are discussing, who often forgo lunch, breakfast or dinner without having much choice in this.

What I have been sent to discuss with you today is the concept of a food policy council which we have adopted at the board of health. I will leave with you the proposal that has been adopted by the board of health, which is about to go to city council, on the setting up of a food policy council.

The purpose of the food policy council is in fact to do away with the necessity of food banks by dealing with the public policies necessary to make sure that people have an adequate supply of food.

This arose out of the work that the board of health did earlier in the past decade to develop what it called a healthy city policy. They wanted to develop policies which would make

Toronto the healthiest city possible. There is, as you know, a worldwide healthy cities movement.

Out of the very extensive discussions and consultations that we held with all kinds of people in the general public, from children to elderly people, in different languages, whatever, four adjectives kept emerging from the discussions, and they were "clean," "green," "quiet" and "safe."

Under "clean," obvious things would come to mind, but under "green," in addition to the greening of the city, arose a very interesting wish on a lot of people's parts to have ways of enhancing, if you like, urban agriculture, growing their own food. Under "safe" arose tremendous discussions about people's fears, whether or not they are founded, about how safe the food supply is, how safe the food is that people get.

Then, of course, the discussions developed further and the idea of having a public policy that ensured an adequate and safe supply of food was developed and, from that, the idea of the food policy council. The two goals of the food policy council I will read to you, because I think they are quite significant.

The first one is to end hunger and the need for a charitable food distribution system. The strategies would include advocacy of school food programs, improved local access to food and that sort of thing. Now, improved local access to food does not just mean people having the money; but also, for example, there is in Metropolitan Toronto a food supply company called Knob Hill Farms where you can buy case loads of food and that sort of thing, except in downtown Toronto there is not public transit access to that particular place, which does seem a bit absurd. In other words, the middle-class people with cars can get there; people who could really benefit from buying case loads cannot get there. So food policy might extend itself into transportation policy, land use policy, a variety of things.

The second goal of the food policy council is to promote food production and distribution systems that will provide us with safe, environmentally friendly, nutritious food, so strategies would come down in the areas of education, improved labelling, waste control and local sustainable production methods, and that is where we get into the idea of urban agriculture.

So as you can see, the food policy council would be one which advocated policies at various levels to make sure that food, like education and health, was a basic right for people, and inasmuch as at the moment education and health are perceived as important enough social goals to be free of charge to the users, we are aware that a basis of health is indeed adequate nutrition and therefore food itself. The policy should make it possible for people not to have to go to charitable sources for food.

It is very clear that there is no food shortage in Ontario. It is very clear that there is enormous wealth in Ontario. Therefore, if we have hunger in Ontario, what is lacking is an appropriate public policy around food, and it is the development of that public policy that the food policy council would work towards. Clearly, there are very strong implications for education. We are obviously concerned with children getting off to the best possible start, and one of the basics, both before they are born and after, is that there be adequate nutrition.

So you can see how the health goals of this province would be well served by making sure that everyone was fed an adequate and nutritious diet. We know that children who are hungry do not benefit from their schooling. We know a whole variety of behaviours arise from people being hungry. Therefore, it seems to us obvious that a food policy being developed in this province would solve a great many problems.

This is not an original idea to the city of Toronto. In Norway, in Wales, in Australia, there are food policy councils working on precisely these sorts of things, and I think if Ontario were to develop such a food policy, the spinoffs in terms of savings in health spending, remedial education and a great variety of things would be very obvious fairly fast. It is for those reasons that the board of health has adopted this as an objective.

I think maybe I will stop there and see if there are questions about what we have in mind.

**The Chair:** Ms Nelson will be providing a handout to us.

**Ms Nelson:** Yes.

**Mr Jackson:** Thank you, Fiona. As always, you stimulate us to think when you make your presentations. Could you expand a bit more, since you have another hat in education, about impediments to education in the Education Act and how you foresee our overcoming some of those impediments in terms of developing programs? You did refer to advocacy and school-based programs as your two leading, proactive approaches. You would be acutely aware of some of the impediments in Ontario to developing those programs. Could we talk a little bit more about that?

1220

**Ms Nelson:** I guess if you were going to have a really good school nutrition program, clearly it would have to be one that was as universal as the education program itself. In other words, all the children would have available to them a lunch program, a snack program, breakfast, whatever.

**Mr Jackson:** To your knowledge, do we have one of those in existence now, somewhere we can look to and maybe get more information on?

**Ms Nelson:** We can look back in our own history. We used to do this sort of thing. What amazes me is that during a war we can do all kinds of things. The possibility for which disappears as soon as peace arrives, which strikes me as very strange. We used to have day care in all the schools during the Second World War.

**Mr Jackson:** We had pay equity as well during the war, as I recall.

**Ms Nelson:** Necessity does breed these things, yes.

I think we need only to look back in our own provincial history. After all, the Day Nurseries Act arose during the war because we were providing day care. As you know, as part of the Day Nurseries Act there is a very extensive amount of regulation about the kind of food that will be provided to children in those circumstances, so we need only to resurrect things that we did 50 years ago.

**Mr Jackson:** But in a more practical sense, you have been before us as another committee dealing with primary education, expanding that, and the linkages between day care, which Richard raised a question on with Father Day. It is that element of it I wish you could just focus in on for a moment with respect to our physical school sites, the linkages with before- and after-school programs, those components requiring food. Does junior kindergarten require food, and if not, how come? I am expanding it into a large area, but from your perspective in education, you could make some very cogent recommendations to us in that area that would link this committee's work with another committee's work.

**Ms Nelson:** The obvious link is that because we have compulsory schooling, all the children are in school, so it is an obvious place to deliver this service. They are already there in the kind of ordered environment that would make a food program quite acceptable. There obviously would have to be structural changes to schools so that the food could be prepared or delivered or eaten in an appropriate way. Sprawled around on gym floors is really not a good way for children to be eating. If we actually want them to learn the kinds of things that are learned at the time people eat in civilized circumstances, we would obviously need to have proper eating facilities. It seems to me that an enormous amount of good social learning takes place around appropriately arranged meal times, so in fact a really educational argument could be made for this, as well as the health and nutrition one.

It is very clear that children need to eat fairly frequently. They are growing very fast. When they are at home you know how frequently they are in the kitchen getting snacks. If you have a few carrots or some celery or something peeled, it disappears pretty fast. So does other stuff that you would rather they did not eat. Certainly for smaller children, snack programs are a very important part of the program, and most junior and senior kindergartens have them now, either fruit or vegetables or biscuits and milk, something like that. As far as breakfast and lunch programs are concerned, the integration of that with child care facilities is obvious.

There is a great deal of argument to be made for the local neighbourhood elementary school being the base for child care, for well-baby clinics, for a whole lot of things to do with the health and welfare of children as well as their education. In fact, it is pretty hard to separate those things. I would love to see us actually launch into such a program. I suspect the savings down the line in health care and a whole lot of things would be very obvious.

During the war in Britain, when the staples of the British diet, grease and sugar, were missing because of rationing and submarines and that sort of thing, the health of the whole population improved immensely because they concentrated on the children and the pregnant women. They made sure they got things like eggs, oranges, milk and that sort of thing. It was an involuntary health experiment on a huge scale, but it was very obvious that there was a great deal of payoff.

We have all kinds of examples to demonstrate to us that delivering this sort of thing to the children through the school system, there is not an argument against it except a lack of will.

**Mr Allen:** As far as I understand, in the United States there are universal food programs in a number of school districts that are in place and functioning, and there is also another model.

Fiona, I want to get at an issue that may be troubling some members of the committee. One can see perhaps an argument developing that we should do some income intervention in order to cope with the deficit in so many families that may lift drives into food banks. The same causation is there that creates the necessity for breakfast clubs and for school programs. One says that perhaps some of these interventions could eliminate food banks, and at the same time we are told, "Don't get into government-sponsored food delivery services, because it is a bottomless pit." Are there some contradictions or dilemmas in all that, that you see, or how do you sort all that out in your own mind?

**Ms Nelson:** I do not see a contradiction there. It seems to me that the rise of the food banks has not coincided with a general economic depression. What it has coincided with is



disgraceful land speculation and property speculation and the consequent rise in the price of housing for people least able to afford it. There seems to be an extremely close correlation between the exorbitant cost of housing for people who were formerly considered middle class and the need for food banks and other forms of charitable distribution. That is why I think the Toronto Board of Health has seen a food policy council as so vital. One of the things it would advocate for most strongly is interventions, if you like, in the housing situation.

Certainly, if you were outside today, you can see that housing has to be a right in this climate or you would freeze to death. Therefore, it seems to us that if there were a much more appropriate social policy in the area of housing, people would have sufficient income to pay for food. The kinds of impediments that prevent people from spending money on food are precisely those sorts of things.

We also have to start working on far better supports for families in general, because at the moment the fragility of the family I think is undermining all kinds of our social institutions and making it extremely difficult. As we know, the mass of poverty has shifted from the elderly poor to the children in our society, and most of those are children of single parents, usually single mothers.

Someone facetiously mentioned pay equity. There is a huge sector of the society that is not covered by that umbrella yet, so I think no matter what we do, it is very clear that we have a society, because we have a responsibility to one another. We see that responsibility to one another in certain sectors and then we get all funny about other ones. I do not believe we would have a whole lot of bridge-playing mothers if we had a decent food policy in this province. I do not believe the reason these children go to breakfast clubs and food banks is because their mothers are out dancing.

I just think what we have to look at it is the whole social policy. Mr Beer's ministry came out with a very interesting document called *Better Beginnings, Better Futures*. If you look at that, if you look at some of stuff that has been developed, the research that has been done by Dr Offord, you can see such close connections among these things and the cry for a more appropriate social policy.

**The Chair:** We had Dr Offord before us this morning.

**Ms Nelson:** That must have been terrific.

**Mr Jackson:** It was for most of us.

**The Chair:** You might want to look for his presentation.

**Ms Nelson:** I think he has done some marvellous research for the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

**The Chair:** Thank you for noting that.

1230

#### CHATHAM OUTREACH FOR HUNGER

**The Chair:** Mr Smith, I am going to ask Mr Neumann to take the chair now. You have been allocated 15 minutes and I unfortunately will have to leave, but he will look after things very well, I am sure.

**Mr R. Smith:** Since I represent the Chatham Outreach for Hunger food bank and because we are a fairly new organization, I thought I would begin to describe how we came together, our experience over the past 16 months or so and then go into maybe some directions in which I think we could be moving.

I am a clergyman in Chatham. Chatham is a community of 40,000 or so. The concern for the need for a food bank arose from the sudden realization on the part of a number of the clergy in Chatham that we were getting many requests for food vouchers and assistance from people in our community, and perhaps the need was being served by the churches very unevenly and, on the part of most people, we felt, very inadequately.

There was also a concern that there was a lot of abuse of this generosity of the people of our community. So the effort to form a food bank, actually the stated purpose in the beginning was that it would be a co-ordination of the efforts of the various churches to bring together this willingness to be generous with the needy in our community. While it does not restrict itself to input from the churches nor indeed is the membership on the board restricted to that, it is still largely through an effort of the churches of Chatham that this food bank is in operation.

We opened in October 1988 and at that point, I think, having been on the planning board from the beginning, our initial concerns, in a community of our size, were: Was there really a need for a food bank? Our initial research indicated there probably was, but there is always an element of doubt in that. The second major question was whether there was going to be support and that, we figured, could only be determined by trying it. So we did and in effect both of those questions were answered in the affirmative.

There was more of a need than we thought there was, and in fact there has been very generous support. There were questions to the speaker two previous to myself about supplies running short and this sort of thing. Since we have opened, we have never had that concern. We have never run short in our supply and we have never even had to call upon a sort of outline of a contingency plan that we have to run a city-wide food drive.

We have always encouraged people to hold food drives and so on, and it has been the generosity largely of churches but also service clubs, some businesses and corporations in this city that have managed to keep us well stocked.

We screen people when they come in, but only in the sense that we want to find out who they are, and we develop a file system simply to control the frequency with which they come to the food bank. No one is turned away who comes to ask us for some food. We figure that if they have come, cap in hand, that is enough of a blow to the ego that we are not going to turn people away at that point. The only restriction we make is that they can come at most once per month.

What we attempt to do is to give them a nutritionally balanced three- to four-day supply of food, which is dependent on the size of their families. A larger family would be given more.

Just an outline of the statistics, again: Chatham is a community of 40,000. It is approximately in the centre of Kent county which, I do not know, might have about double that population in total. After 16 months we have 1,200 families registered. If 1,200 families represent 4,000 people, then that is about five per cent of the population of Kent county that has turned to us at some point in that 16-month period for assistance; that is 1,200 different families.

If we were operating on an assumption of five per cent of the population having to turn to us at one point or another, it seemed to us that that indicated a really definite need.

The need seems to have been growing steadily since we opened. As word has gotten around, the flow of people through our doors has increased steadily. January of this year was the busiest month we have recorded so far. We are open three after-

noons a week, Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and there was an average of 21 families coming in the door each day we were open. Again, this is a small community we are talking about. So to our estimation, that is a real need.

Just in terms of specifics, our food bank runs with one paid co-ordinator. She is underpaid, in essence. It has worked out to be a more or less full-time job, although that is not the way it was at first envisioned. We have a volunteer support group of probably about 100 individuals from the community who are just volunteers, some will show up quite regularly, others more infrequently, but an active volunteer group of about 100.

A breakdown of the people who have come to us would indicate that about a third of the families are single-parent families, and of the total number that are benefited from the food of the food bank, about 40 per cent are children.

I do not think these statistics will be very new to you. I think they fall more or less in line with the research done by the Canadian Association of Food Banks. But in our records, the support that people have when they come to us is that about 50 per cent are on some kind of support, such as welfare or mother's allowance; about 20 per cent are on old-age pension; 11 per cent have a wage which is not adequate to meet their needs—11 per cent are on a wage; 12 per cent on unemployment; and the rest fall into smaller categories.

The way in which we try to keep track of the amount of food that has gone out from our food bank is to attach an approximate dollar value to it. That is not to say that we have had that kind of money given to us, but we attach a dollar value to it to keep track of it. Our estimation is, up until a month ago, I think it was, that dollar value is over \$110,000. Again, we took that as an indication, along with the strong volunteer support, that there is a strong community support in communities like Chatham for this kind of thing.

Many people challenged us at the beginning, saying there was not the will in our society to support this kind of work. I guess our only explanation would be, if that has been the case in the past, it is because there has not been a method of channelling that support and giving people in our communities kind of a channel for their generosity to get to the people who need it. In Chatham we seem to have provided that, the support has been strong and it has not diminished one bit.

You may have more questions about the specifics of our arrangement, but here are just some thoughts on where we could be going from here. Our co-ordinator was not able to come today, but I asked her yesterday what she would say to you if she could come here. She said, and this is an approximate quote, "Each of you on the committee should be required to live on welfare for a month." I do not know in exactly what sense she meant that, but I think what she is saying, and she went on to describe this a bit, is that if she had to put her finger on the problem, it is that the support of things like welfare or mother's allowance, even unemployment, does not seem to be adequate.

She said if the difference, for these families coming in, between eating and not eating is the \$75 to \$150 worth of groceries that we give to them, if that \$75 to \$150 were on their welfare cheque, we would not need to be there. I guess that makes some logical sense, though that just plugs in at one point on really what is a continuum of places in which you can address this question.

In the best of all possible worlds, we could say the best thing to do would be to give everybody a job so they can go out and buy their own groceries. At the very bottom of the continuum is what we are doing, I think, which is providing food gratis to anybody who comes and asks for it. And maybe in

between there are the concerns like the level of welfare support or, as we heard from previous speakers, things like breakfast programs.

One that I think is important is the cost of housing. Some contact that I have had with the poor of our community indicates that they pay as much as 60 per cent, and even more sometimes, for their housing, which is accommodation that I really would not choose to live in at all. When the support you have goes to that extent to put a roof over your head and some heat around you, it does not go very far, by the time the end of the months comes around, to buy the groceries and so on. As you sort of calculate it out on a minimum basis, if it is enough, so much for rent and so much for food and so on, it does not cover for emergencies.

That is what we find particularly. A lot of people are coming in saying, "Everything was going okay until the fridge blew up"; or even more minor things than that, "...until our kids forgot their boots at school and somebody took off with them." So it is the unexpected that makes them not have enough dollars to put food on their table at the end.

I guess if I had a suggestion it would be to plug into that continuum at the highest level possible for the dollars that are available, to try to give not just enough food to people but as much as possible the dignity they would have if it were possible for them to go into a grocery store and purchase their own food. Maybe I will leave it at that.

**Mr Keyes:** Thank you very much for the revelations, Robert. One of the things I have listened to in the hearings for two days, yesterday and today, seems to be that the major problem has always been related to housing and the high cost of housing, and that in the government's new program it has tried to look at that reality by moving from 80 per cent of shelter costs, whatever they were, to 100 per cent of shelter costs, up to a certain maximum. So I think that approach is the right direction.

I am surprised, in Chatham, and I wonder if you have done a survey on that, that the housing prices would have been quite as significant a problem. In Toronto here it is understandable. Accommodation prices are so phenomenally high that the ceiling set by the government then is not adequate to meet their needs. But when you come to a town of 40,000, are your housing costs out of line for the average across Ontario, or have you had a look at that?

**Mr R. Smith:** I really have not studied it. People I have talked to have indicated that even for something like half or a quarter of a house, not even what you would call a duplex, they are paying as much as \$500 and then getting support in the area of \$700 or \$800. It just seems to me that something is way out of line in there.

**Mr Keyes:** That was the move of the government, to try to move from 80 per cent of cost. If it is 80 per cent of \$500 you are still left with the same problem, as though it were 80 per cent of \$1,000 for accommodation. But if you go to 100 per cent and have a reasonable limit, then it should relieve that problem in certain parts of the province.

**Mr R. Smith:** I think, too, one issue in Chatham is that there is a relatively small amount of rental property available. So it seems that the market will bear fairly high prices.

**Mr Keyes:** I think one of my feelings, and I do not want to prejudge what we do in the committee, is to be spending more of our money towards providing the rent-geared-to-income housing, nonprofit, co-op, etc. That is a major area that has to



be worked on at the same time as you look at not just changing amounts you pay people, but getting further back into what are the causes that still bring them the greatest grief.

I was impressed yesterday with a group from the Belleville Gleaners Food Bank, who had quite a unique situation in a rural part of eastern Ontario. Do you do any other counselling? Their contention was that quite a few people who may come to a food bank may not have been aware of some of the other agencies that might be able to look after some of their concerns. So they have spent a great deal of time personally counselling the groups that come to be sure they are fully aware of the other agencies.

**Mr R. Smith:** We do, but it does not sound as if it is to the extent that they do. Our co-ordinator has made herself very aware of the various social agencies and what kind of support they can give, and does, to a small extent, act as a kind of referral for them, but it does not sound like it is quite as intensive as—

**Mr Keyes:** Well, this co-ordinator was doing it all on her own, so it was quite miraculous.

**Mr Allen:** I have just a very brief question. I think it is clear that many of the agencies, food agencies and others, want to get into that kind of additional work, but they are so stressed out dealing with the food emergency that there really is no time to get at that other core problem. You have really covered the front very, very admirably in terms of your statistics and your breakdowns, and I just did not have a base figure, I guess, for the date of your beginning the operation.

**Mr R. Smith:** October 1988.

**Mr Allen:** So you are fairly recent.

**Mr R. Smith:** Yes, we have been in operation for 16 months.

## AFTERNOON SITTING

The committee resumed at 1347.

**The Chair:** I am Yvonne O'Neill. I am the Chair of the committee. A 20-minute presentation is what you are slated for and we would appreciate if you would give us some time with the questions.

### INCOME MAINTENANCE FOR THE HANDICAPPED CO-ORDINATING GROUP

### METRO TORONTO ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICE WORKERS NETWORK

### DIS-ABLED WOMEN'S NETWORK

**Mr Southern:** I would like to start off by saying we are sort of coming together as a loose coalition on the issue of food banks today. This is Suzanne Schembri from Woodgreen Community Centre, and Dorothy Heard, who is with the Sistering Association and she also volunteers and works with other food banks.

My name is John Southern and I am a member of the Income Maintenance for the Handicapped Co-ordinating Group, which is a coalition of about 20 groups representing both consumer organizations of disabled people and service providers to the disabled. Also, I am here as a member of Persons United for

**Mr Allen:** You are not feeling especially burnt out, stressed out, time-worn, at this point in time, and for you the community is supportive and feeling very fresh and good about it all.

**Mr R. Smith:** Oh, yes.

**Mr Allen:** I guess you would have to worry about what happens 10 years from now if something else has not happened.

**Mr R. Smith:** Yes, I think that is a concern. As I say, we have not had to turn to the effort of a city-wide food drive or anything to keep our shelves stocked, but I do not know how long the generosity of the community will hold out. It has been quite strong since we have opened, and growing.

**Mr Allen:** I think that is a good sign. It is also a good sign that they would be willing to support other kinds of measures that perhaps would deal with the problem at a more fundamental level. I gather from your remarks that you are all in favour of that.

**Mr R. Smith:** There is another group that is trying to set up some housing support in the city and that sort of thing, so there are other efforts going.

**The Vice-Chair:** I do not see any other requests for questions so I want to thank you for coming before the committee. Your contribution will be helpful to us.

Members of the committee, this completes our presentations for the morning. I would remind members that we start at 1:40 and that the group that is coming in is coming in at that time at our request, so I would appreciate your prompt attendance at that time. I intend to start the hearings promptly at 1:40.

The committee recessed at 1244.

Self-Help in Ontario, PUSH, which is a cross-disability organization.

**The Chair:** I guess you have made other presentations at Queen's Park.

**Mr Southern:** Many. I guess I should point out to committee members who do not realize it that I was also a member of the infamous Thomson committee that produced Obstacles.

**The Chair:** That is correct. I remember. Thank you very much for reminding us.

**Mr Southern:** Not Obstacles; it was Transitions. There are so many committees and reports you never remember which ones are which.

To start off, I would like to talk a little bit about the disability issue because I think food banks are sort of a part of the problem of being disabled. I will explain further what that is. Myself, I am totally blind. With some assistance and rehabilitation or whatever you want to call it, you can learn to live relatively well with blindness. I think I have done relatively well. I can run a home, look after myself and function on a level.

I think one of the biggest problems disabled people face is prejudice. That prejudice is felt throughout society in the acceptance of society to allow disabled people to participate fully.

which of course prevents many disabled people from acquiring employment. For example, among the blind community, the working-age blind in Canada, the rate, as far as anybody can gather, runs anywhere between 70 and 80 per cent, which is just scandalous.

I know a lot of disabled people who will not, in their opinion, lower themselves to go to a food bank. There is this attitude that it is begging for charity. I know one or two people I can think of right off the bat who often, at the end of the month, just decide they are not going to eat anything for a few days until the family benefits cheque comes through. In a society as rich as ours, to have that happen nowadays I just find unbelievable.

I know if I did not have some of the actual supports and people around me, I would end up in the same position. Unfortunately, at the moment I am on family benefits and Gains-D—guaranteed annual income system for the disabled—where you get a little bit more for being disabled. Whoop-de-do. Anyway, I suppose it does help. I still think there is a lot more that could be done and should be done.

I hear a lot of people knocking welfare bums and people on family benefits. I am sure there are some malingerers and people who abuse the system, as there is with anything, but nevertheless, if you sat day after day listening to some of the presentations I had to listen to when we were doing the social assistance review, you would not criticize people any more. You just would not when you realize that many people—I do not just mean the odd one—would sooner spend their welfare cheque on a job search than on food. The work ethic is still very strong in this country, regardless of what anybody says.

A lot of people who do not have the skills to participate in the technical revolution and do not have computer skills or whatever are being left behind, and to be forced into low-paying jobs that pay the minimum wage I do not think is any answer. I hear everybody saying how wonderful the supports to employment program, the STEP program, is. Those are the new employment changes to social assistance that were announced recently in our province. They may help some people—I am sure they do—but for the majority, and certainly for a lot of disabled people, we need more than the STEP program. We need jobs, we need affordable housing and we do not need food banks.

When you are disabled, for everything you want from social assistance or from the service providers, whatever you need in life, you almost have to demoralize yourself and pretend that you are helpless and abandoned to get service. If you go in there self-assured and confident, they will almost tell you to go away and will not serve you. I think we should be promoting that kind of thing, self-assuredness and confidence in people, not discouraging it.

We called the report *Transitions* because we want people to leave the system. One of the criticisms we made is that people on welfare should be proud of themselves and should not be looked down on by the general public. But how are we going to achieve that if you see people going into the food banks and coming out with little bags of food or something? It is no way to deal with the problems we have of feeding the poor.

I do not have the answers. I do not think anybody has the full answers on what to do with it, but I think this government should spend more money on social assistance, regardless of whether there is a cap on the CAP or not. Do not blame the feds. We know the feds are no great government. That has been proven over the last five years. Why start blaming them now? But I really want to see some action on the SARC report,

having given enough of my life to it, and I know disabled people in this province want to see much more action than we have seen so far. I will pass it over to Suzanne.

**Ms Schembri:** Today I am speaking on behalf of the Metro Toronto Adult Protection Service Workers Network. The APSWs are funded primarily by the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Our program was initiated in 1976. The network meets on a monthly basis to address different issues affecting the developmentally handicapped and advocating response to the lack of various resources.

We do professional development and peer support. The adult protective service workers work with developmentally handicapped adults who are living in the community. Most of them live independently. Some of them live with their families and are working towards independence. We advocate on their behalf for them to access resources and offer emotional and instrumental support to help them learn new skills.

Through case management, we are involved in linking consumers to a wide variety of needed services. All of our consumers are recipients of social assistance with very few exceptions. Many of them are forced to use food banks due to inadequate incomes. Some of them are too embarrassed to get free food and they try to borrow from friends or family, whoever they can, and they end up being in a cycle of constant debt where they owe most of their family benefits cheque at the end of the month before they even get a chance to cash it.

From our standpoint, it is very important that the social assistance rates are increased immediately so that food banks can be eliminated.

I will just give you a couple of examples now. One is the case of a developmentally handicapped man. After his mother died, his sister had to stay home to care for him because he was one of our lower functioning clients. She was therefore unable to seek employment. She was refused welfare and the two of them were forced to live off his one family benefits cheque. They were forced to use food banks as a result.

In many other situations, because of the lack of affordable housing, people are forced to use food banks. A high percentage of their income is paid to rent and utilities and there is not enough to pay for the other necessities. Generally, it is assumed that about 25 per cent of someone's income should be put towards accommodation. However, social assistance really does not make this possible.

In addition, we deal with a few families and they seem to really be experiencing increased problems getting by on social assistance. In one case there are two developmentally handicapped parents. They have one multiply handicapped child and another child. The parents have been trying to get on to family benefits, on to Gains-D, but they are still on welfare. Even though they have been unemployed for many years and the husband also has a psychiatric diagnosis, they have not had any luck being able to get on family benefits. As you may know, welfare generally provides a lower amount than family benefits does, so this family has to use food banks frequently.

A large number of the developmentally handicapped are unable to be self-sufficient through no fault of their own, yet the system seems to punish them by providing an inadequate income.

While the food banks are in operation, it would be a good idea to have consumers involved in the process so that they can actively help themselves. Current food banks in existence should be provided with incentives to allow consumer involvement on boards, working committees and actual provision of services. Many developmentally handicapped people are not



working due to their inadequate appropriate training in the community. They should be provided with a meaningful role in society.

#### 1400

Recent changes to raise the ceiling for earnings and continue benefits during FBA for recipients have been helpful. However, more funds must be provided to those who are unable to work and funding to employment training programs, such as Project Work, should be increased to accommodate the need for intense one-to-one training and job placement.

The reality of most developmentally handicapped adults in Toronto is that they are living in poverty due to meagre incomes on social assistance that do not provide for the basic necessities of life. The APSW network would like to see immediate increases to social assistance, as outlined in Transitions, to ultimately eliminate the need for food banks and other short-term measures.

I would like to turn it over to Dorothy Heard now.

**Mrs Heard:** This is the first time I have ever sat in on anything of this kind. I am very much the new man on the block as far as petitioning is concerned, but I am involved with all aspects of the food bank, food distribution, welfare and disability. I think I am more in a position to answer questions than I am to really make a presentation.

I worked at the Salvation Army for some years helping in the office. They have food vouchers which help. People are allowed to get a voucher and buy what is needed for their diet. At the moment I am assisting in a local branch, Parkdale branch, of the food bank which is operative only every second Wednesday. We get the people who are really desperate, but the food that we provide them is not what is needed. We provide food for people who can cook. This is what we get from the food bank. It is food for people who can cook, who can manage a kitchen, and we have single roomers, people who are living on their own.

You get a diabetic person and included in his food bag for the week is maybe a box of chocolates or a package of marshmallows. If they were given the money to buy the food they would get what was appropriate to a diabetic diet. It is the same thing with heart patients. They are given totally inappropriate food. We cannot help it. We ask the food bank. Our driver goes over. We have to get someone to go over to the food bank, pick up whatever we try to order. They give us whatever they give us and that is what we have to distribute. We have no choice.

People complain and say, "Why can't we just come in and say I want this, I want that?" We are not running a shopping centre. We have a church vestibule, four hours, one day every second week. There are two people who do the physical movement of that food. I try to help by getting them in there one at a time so that they are not swamped by people.

I am on a disability pension because I wrecked my knees. I lost my job, my apartment, everything, at one point six years ago. My epilepsy is controllable, but I cannot work. I went from a registered licensed optician's salary to less than \$600 a month all in one go and I had a very bad time of it. I applied for disability pension. I was turned down three times in a year. It turned out they had somebody else's file in my folder. I lived at 15 different addresses in one year.

This is not my hard luck story; it is a fact of life. The government screwed my account up totally. I lived on people's chesterfields. I lived off food banks. I could not get money. I could not get an address because I had no money. I could not

get any money because I had no address. I lived through it. I have a lovely little apartment now. I do my best to help out. I help out with a group called Sistering. I know people who are in DAWN, the Dis-Abled Women's Network, and I help run this little branch of the food bank. I do what I can. When I am sick I do not do it.

**Mr Southern:** I would like to say a few things to pull the whole thing together. One thing I would like to pull out is that the Daily Bread Food Bank did a survey and found that 22 per cent of heads of households who go to the food banks are persons with disabilities and 15 per cent who go to food banks are people with other disabilities and may not be eligible for family benefits. That is a fairly high percentage of people who have to rely on food banks. I think that needs pointing out.

I think Dorothy just made a good point, and it was made more than once to the Social Assistance Review Committee, that people can mock the poor or criticize the poor all they like, but I will tell you, you do not know when you are going to be there. We had a couple of people who said: "I remember when I was driving down the road in my BMW. We didn't realize the day would come when we'd end up going to a food bank." That is why everybody should be concerned in this province. Unfortunately, despite all the press we got with the Social Assistance Review Committee, despite the well and good intentioned Honourable John Sweeney and despite other people who have been involved in the fight, we have still got relatively nowhere. I never will give up the fight to see people better housed and better fed in this province, I promise you that, but unfortunately other people do.

Nevertheless, I hope this committee makes sure somebody hears what the people have to say.

**Mr Allen:** Thank you very much. I appreciate the presentation the income maintenance group and the adult protective service workers have provided, and in particular the personal experience relations that are very relevant to our understanding of this problem.

Is the food bank you are connected with strictly for disabled persons or just generally available to the community in that neighbourhood?

**Mrs Heard:** It is for the Parkdale community. We are a small section of a Parkdale church. They tried to run it out of someone's home, but it got out of control, unwieldy and the house was totally trashed a couple of times, so one of the churches gave us a vestibule. The whole area we have is not as big as the centre of your square here, where dozens of boxes of food are brought in from a wagon, unloaded, sorted into bags and handed out.

The ones we get are the ones who are overflow from the hospital on Queen Street, people who are developmentally handicapped; they are not all physically handicapped. The best they can do a lot of times is open a can, heat it up and eat it. They are given things they have to cook; unsuitable items.

Second Harvest brings us boxes of discarded green peppers, onions; most of them are rotten. We used to throw them out, but I said to my daughter-in-law: "Put them outside. Give them a bag. What I won't eat, someone else probably will." They get eaten; they get taken.

**Mr Allen:** So it just happens by virtue of where you are that you get a lot of people with disabilities coming to you?

**Mrs Heard:** Because we are in Parkdale. We only handle Parkdale.

**Mr Allen:** Is there any other food bank in the area that you are aware of? By "area," I mean sort of Metropolitan Toronto.

**Mrs Heard:** There is Holy Family, as I understand, but I do not know where it is. Then there is one slightly east of us. They are all small branches. Some of them are open more hours than we are. My daughter-in-law is about on the verge of burn-out at the moment, just the sheer physical—she is built about half the size of me.

**Mr Allen:** Would it be true of all of those food distribution centres in that area, that they all are catering very heavily to people with disabilities?

**Mrs Heard:** Yes, developmentally or physically.

**Mr Allen:** Are there food distribution centres elsewhere in the city where that happens to be the case as well, to the best of your knowledge?

**Mrs Heard:** I do not know.

**Mr Southern:** I have talked to a lot of people who run food banks and they say there is a high percentage of disabled people at every food bank, and every person I have talked to has said he has seen a lot of disabled people.

**Mr Allen:** You probably know better than anyone what has been done to date with the SARC reforms as they relate to the disabled community and people on Gains-D. Could you tell us where that is at, just so the committee has that in its mind?

**Mr Southern:** Obviously there were changes, as I mentioned: STEP, which may help a few people. But disabled people are not able to take advantage of any employment program, regardless of how good it is, because there is still a lot of discrimination disabled people face in trying to acquire jobs out there. Also, a lot of people with disabilities need special equipment. Vocational rehabilitation services are running out of money and the assistive devices program is underfunded.

I know it is a lot for government to do. We do not have any way of measuring the payoff, but I think the payoff of getting disabled people off family benefits would just be incredible. You would save so much money. There must be at least 90,000 disabled people on Gains-D. With a bit of effort you could lower that by a good few thousand and save yourselves a lot of money.

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**Mr McGuinty:** You alluded in passing to some assistance that you were justified to being held up because of an error in your file. How long a period did that cover?

**Mrs Heard:** About 11 months. I was disabled in January and I applied for disability. I sent in all the correct papers and was turned down because I did not qualify.

I went through the whole procedure again on my own. In December of that same year, 1985, I wound up in the psychiatric ward of Mississauga Hospital simply because there was not another bed for me anywhere in the city of Mississauga, which is where I lived. The discharge planning nurse took time of her own free will and with a letter from me she went to the disability office and said, "I need to see the lady's file." So the man started to punch it up on the computer. She says: "I have seen that. I want the file." He went and he pulled out the cardboard file and inside there was someone else's papers.

**Mr McGuinty:** So your assistance was held off for 11 months. Did you ever appeal that?

**Mrs Heard:** I got it immediately.

**Mr McGuinty:** No, the 11-month back pay.

**Mrs Heard:** I never got it. They said there was no way.

**Mr McGuinty:** Who are "they"?

**Mrs Heard:** Whoever sent me the letter from the office.

**Mr McGuinty:** Did you ever appeal that?

**Mrs Heard:** No, I was too happy to be in my own place finally.

**Mr McGuinty:** No, but I would respectfully suggest, if you were a constituent of mine—I would ask that you ask your MPP to appeal that on your behalf. I cannot make a judgement but I have had similar cases. If, through a clerical error, one's assistance is deferred beyond the date at which you became eligible, you have a right to recourse and I really suggest you follow that up.

**Mrs Heard:** The thing is that I am not a fighter and when this went through I was so relieved.

**Mr McGuinty:** I know that. That is why some people are taken advantage of. They are sometimes intimidated by the bureaucracy and they are apprehensive and reluctant to take the initiative, but I could guarantee that your member would be quite willing to inquire into that matter for you.

**Mrs Heard:** Thank you. I should maybe have a talk to him.

**Mr McGuinty:** I wish you would.

**Mr D. W. Smith:** Mrs Heard, do you see the same people at your Parkdale place more than once a month or generally once a month?

**Mrs Heard:** We only function every second Wednesday for four hours, and yes, we see the same people every two weeks.

**The Chair:** Thank you all very much.

#### ONTARIO SOCIAL ASSISTANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE NETWORK

**The Chair:** Mr Hayday, if you would please proceed it would be helpful. We have had a lot of necessity for flexibility in this committee today. I am not going to give you all the reasons that has been happening, but your being five minutes early will help us to work our way out of the difficulties.

**Mr Hayday:** I would be happy to help you work your way out of difficulties, if you will acknowledge my laryngitis.

**The Chair:** Oh, my. You have problems as well. We would like to have some question time, if that is appropriate. You have been allocated 20 minutes, so perhaps you could give us 10 minutes for questions. You may begin.

**Mr Hayday:** I would first like to thank you for the opportunity to speak with the standing committee, specifically on the issue of food banks. Partly in recognition of your own capacity to read, as well as defending my own vocal capabilities, I am going to do a synopsis of my presentation as I go, if I may. I would be happy to expand on things as part of the questions.



The Ontario Social Assistance Review Committee Network began last year as part of a coalition of corporate, business, labour, faith, community and social service agencies across the province who together were concerned about the need to reform a system that was entrapping individuals in conditions of poverty, and conditions of abject poverty in certain circumstances.

We have a very specific interest in food banks. We see food banks very much as a symptom of the scope and prevalence of poverty in the province. As a first priority, we believe that we need to address the need for food banks. Why do we have them? Why are they a growth industry in some cases?

We believe that the fundamental issue underlying the existence of food banks is inadequate income. We believe people are borrowing against resources that they would normally use to pay for groceries to pay for shelter, to pay for child care, to pay for transportation.

We applaud the early announcements from last year, which did begin to address the question of reform, but we believe the reform process for social assistance is a three-sided affair. It is a triangle and we have addressed two sides of the triangle and have sadly neglected the third. The two sides of the triangle we did address were those sides which related to the disincentives to work and the questions of shelter, but the third side of the triangle, the side that is the most vulnerable and the side that is the weakest, is the side where there is the question of adequacy of benefit rates.

We know that one of the recommendations of the Thomson report was to look at the development and implementation of a market basket approach: What does it cost you to feed your family and your dependants? Are we providing what some have called a fair formula as a method of obtaining those funds?

We can see that post-reform we have made some gains. In the example I have set out in my paper, we have in fact made some gains there, but we are still fully 20 per cent below even the most stringent calculation of a poverty line. As long as that gap continues, and we believe that gap will be accelerated by the capping of the Canada assistance plan, people who are dependent upon assistance have not a delayed chance but no chance of ever escaping the entrapment that represents. It is just mathematically impossible to catch up. If inflation is running at 4.5 per cent a year and your increases and support are going up by five per cent, it is mathematically impossible to attain even a level of poverty in this country, much less adequacy.

We are deeply concerned about the Canada assistance plan. We are equally concerned that the legal challenges to it will be ineffective. We are concerned that there has not been sufficient political and public will expressed about that cap.

We recommend that the provincial government immediately begin a process of developing a fair formula market basket and the necessary goods and services to determine assistance rates and to maintain their adequacy. We are unaware of any work in that regard at this time.

We believe that the supports to employment program which was announced last May is in fact one way in which the provincial government can help those in the workforce to receive adequate incomes. We are concerned that with the rate of subscription to that program, which I believe you have heard about, that program will be struggling with the increased enrolment and may not have adequate resources for it to be a legitimate experiment. We are therefore recommending that full funding be guaranteed by the Treasury for the adequate implementation of the supports to employment program. We believe further that the definition of eligibility for that program should be based on

needs and asset testing rather than on questions of conditional entitlement.

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We are also concerned with the plight of the working poor. We do not believe that any single ministry and government has the solution, even should they adopt a comprehensive reform for the social assistance rates. We believe the responsibility to grapple with the question of poverty in this province is a question that requires leadership and the participation of many ministries. It requires participation as well from community leaders, and we believe that there is a political need to engage other community leaders to address this problem.

The growth of wealth in the province of Ontario has not been paralleled by an equivalent growth in government spending to address the problems of the working poor.

We are further aware that the two largest income cohorts in this province, the two fastest growing income cohorts in this province are those who are working at the level of poverty and those who are in the highest wage category, and that there has been a substantial erosion of what we have fondly referred to and depended upon previously, the middle class. We think some of these structural considerations need leadership, need study and need specific recommendations to address the long-term implications, implications that are in the area of labour supply, in the area of qualifications for work, and in the ancillary costs which accrue from people who are in conditions of poverty also becoming high consumers, as a result of their life circumstances, of other services.

**The Chair:** Is that your presentation?

**Mr Hayday:** I am prepared to stop there, sure. I am depending upon questions.

**Mr Neumann:** If I could focus on your comments on the issue of the working poor, you seem to combine that with some comments about social assistance. What is your understanding of the importance of the minimum wage adjustments as they were dealt with in the SARC report and subsequently?

**Mr Hayday:** The recommendations in the SARC report for minimum wage adjustments have not been implemented, nor are they under study so far as I know, so I have some concerns about that. I think the other reason I am linking considerations of working poor to people on social assistance is that our best guesses are that people on social assistance are not the only individuals lining up at food banks and that there needs to be some reconciliation between the costs of living in this province, the costs of working in this province with the costs of feeding one's family in this province, and I am not sure that work has occurred.

In the STEP program, supports to employment initiatives, as an example, we know that half of the municipalities in this province are disqualifying individuals who are employed from taking advantage of that program, even if their level of employ is such that they are significantly below the poverty line and do not have adequate resources, adequate monies coming in to meet their bills on a weekly basis. If they are employed, they are ineligible. That element of categorical ineligibility places them in a category—

**Mr Neumann:** Who is determining them ineligible? I do not understand that. Who is determining that they are ineligible?

**Mr Hayday:** Half of the municipalities in this province. It is at their discretion, so the opportunity planning that would be available to them is denied.

**Mr Neumann:** Have you done an analysis of which municipalities—

**Mr Hayday:** I believe that information is readily available to you from the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association.

**Mr Allen:** I appreciate a presentation from the SARC Network, because I know you are probably among the closest monitoring groups as far as the implementation process is concerned, and I think we need to keep in touch with you about that whole process. First of all, there is a lot of talk about whether or not to eliminate food banks. When you talk about eliminating food banks as even a distant goal, can I be clear what language you are using? Are you talking eliminating the huge distribution system that now feeds people whose only problem is that they do not have enough revenue to buy it in the store, and otherwise life is okay, or are you referring also to the food emergency services that relate to the provision of the needs of those who fall through the cracks in most big systems?

**Mr Hayday:** I do not think anyone, either in the world of government or in the world of corporations, has yet been able to design a system which works predictably and reliably for everyone, so I would not be arguing against some kind of gap coverage.

I do believe, though, that the systemic donor recruitment and maintenance of an infrastructure concerned with food distribution does a disservice on two critical fronts. On one of those fronts, we have lost an opportunity to mobilize the goodwill of individual donors who believe that the only solution to poverty they can make a real contribution to is to add something to their grocery cart and drop it off at the fire station. We have not presented them with real options of other ways in which they can address the question of poverty in this province. We have not taken advantage of a teachable moment for donor education.

I think that is half of the problem and the other half of the problem is that we are creating a system which, if it survives long enough, will do what most systems do, perpetuate itself and lobby for growth.

**Mr McGuinty:** You used a word which I think is a key word, "systemic." It was used by a young lady who came from Washington and made a presentation to us this morning. Her thesis was along these lines. In her experience the food bank fill-in, if you will, was started about 10 years ago on the assumption that it was a kind of a fill-in measure, temporary, a way of getting people in the community involved.

They have been successful, but never were they intended as a substitute but rather as a supplement. The word "systemic" is very well chosen. In the biological sense it is something that is rooted in the plant, derives nourishment from the roots, bears fruit, and it becomes ingrained within the mindset of the people. Her point was that our thinking about the food banks should not be that they are systemic but rather a temporary fill-in.

A good image that I find useful is that although food banks render a service, they are a Band-Aid on a cancer of the liver. While they might alleviate the cancer, they might at the same time serve a disuseful purpose by casting attention away from the need to treat it. Would you agree with that thesis?

**Mr Hayday:** I certainly agree with the thesis if you use the word "prevent" instead of "treat."

**Mr McGuinty:** Prevent; exactly.

**Mr Hayday:** Our experience is that our capacity to deal with problems after the fact has questionable efficacy.

**Mr McGuinty:** Yes, after the fact; that is right.

**Mr Hayday:** We are obscuring a fundamental structural problem in the way we are finding opportunities to distribute adequate supports for families and individuals in the province.

**Mr McGuinty:** You put that very well. Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr Hayday. I do not have any other persons wanting to question you. I think you have got a different vision, your perspective. Thank you very much for presenting it under personal circumstances that are less than comfortable.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** I wonder if we have heard anything back yet from the ministry around the statistics around the supports to employment program plans, and if we have any information about that stuff, whether that is still the old work incentive program and how much is STEP and that kind of thing.

**The Chair:** Our clerk and I both heard it would be this afternoon.

I understand we have one of the two presenters from the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty. We have also placed a call to Windsor to see what has happened to our presenter who was to be on at 1:40.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** Pam never made it?

**The Chair:** It just seems to be a day when things are somewhat upside down.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** There are those who want John Clarke to disappear, but no, he is here.

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## ONTARIO COALITION AGAINST POVERTY

**The Chair:** Mr Clarke, I am Yvonne O'Neill, the Chair of the committee. We would like you to accommodate us with a 15-minute presentation and hopefully you will provide some time for questions.

**Mr Clarke:** I should explain first of all that I expect to be joined by Joyce Main from the steering committee of the Coalition Against Poverty. She has not arrived yet. We are getting off a little early.

**The Chair:** Yes, you may have. I am sorry. It is 20 minutes I allocated for your presentation.

**Mr Clarke:** She will be happy, I am sure, to help with the answering of any questions when she shows up.

I should first of all explain with regard to the existence of an Ontario Coalition Against Poverty that we come out of the three-pronged march from Windsor, Sudbury and Ottawa that converged on this august building last year. The forces that were active in mobilizing that coalition recognized the need for—I will not be so pessimistic as to say a permanent anti-poverty coalition, but I do have to say a long-term anti-poverty coalition. Accordingly, we have pulled together a steering committee that represents poor people and their interests from across the province. We are in the process now of building an



organization that I am sure you will be hearing from a great deal in the very near future.

I would point out that as an organization we have very much a commitment to combating poverty and hunger, but to us that is a question of challenging political decisions that have allowed those phenomena to arise in this province. Many people who come here I am sure will be armed with a great number of statistics. That is not my primary function here today, but I must note, in opening a presentation on the food bank phenomenon in this province, the enormous scale of food bank dependency that has arisen.

It has become not a feature of this province so much as a way of life for tens of thousands of people. We are told that about 80,000 people a month use food bank services in Metropolitan Toronto. That is a stadium full of human beings living off private charity every month in this city.

The Canadian Association of Food Banks tells us that there are about 1.4 million people across the country using food bank services every year. If it were possible to include those people who turn to family and friends as a means of avoiding going to food banks, you would clearly have to at least double that figure.

I would like to look briefly at the implications of this state of affairs. For those who utilize food bank services, I do not think we can talk about a life of any quality. We are talking about people living in the very depths of misery, people having to put up with humiliation and degradation.

I am very conscious of the fact that among those people who work to provide emergency food services, there are a great number who are very humane and very caring. I am aware of the fact that there are a great number of people caught in the need to provide food bank services who rail against the situation, who are very indignant and who are perfectly aware of the contradictions inherent in what they are doing.

None the less, I would have to say that it has to be recognized that the need to turn to private charity in order to achieve the basics of life is a factor that brings degradation and shame into people's lives. The shame belongs not really to those people. It belongs to the society that tolerates and perpetuates and exacerbates such a state of affairs.

Private charity has always been part of the edifice that has confronted poor people in the province of Ontario. In the 1800s poor people were farmed out to privately run work houses. I would suggest that today in 1990 the poor are still being farmed out by the government to private charity. The only difference now is that people receive a partial payment with regard to the basic necessities of life and are then left to go to private charities to make up the difference.

I would also have to say, with regard to this private charity network, that what we have to bear in mind is that the level of public accountability in that system is very, very limited. The de facto adjunct to the welfare system in not challengeable in the way that government-run service provision is. What intrusions take place into people's lives on a daily basis courtesy of that network of private charity? What arbitrary decisions are they faced with on a daily basis? What control mechanisms exist to examine the way services are provided, the quality of food that is provided?

Basically, the poor, when they confront that private charity network, are in a situation of having to face the fact that they can take it or they can leave it, but there is no real alternative; there is no real accountability in the system.

Measures of control and regulation have always been very much part of the way by which the undeserving poor have been

weeded out and punished. I would have to say that good intentions and even necessary emergency work notwithstanding, the charity network is part, objectively, of the process of punishing poor people in this province.

For governments, the implications of such a state of affairs are very, very clear. I would suggest that the tens of thousands of people in the province of Ontario who have been turned over to private charity have been effectively in fact disowned. They have been effectively in fact disfranchised. A person who is forced to live on other people's food handouts as a means of surviving is living in a state, you might say, of internal exile. He or she is not being treated as a citizen. He or she is being treated as a charity case and is being denied participation in the life of this province in any real sense of the term.

The Canadian Association of Food Banks tells us that about three quarters of the people who are turning to food banks are on social assistance. The political decision that has been made with regard to those tens of thousands of people is very clear, but it goes beyond that. We have in this province a minimum wage that consigns large numbers of people to private charity in order to survive. Just as directly, you have a state of legislated hunger and legislated poverty. With regard to the working poor, the decision that has been taken politically is to say to the employers: "You do not have to provide a living wage to people. Don't worry. There are food banks there to pick up the slack."

With regard to housing, the situation is similar. The chronic lack of affordable housing that exists arises from a state of affairs where effectively landlords and developers are being told, "Don't worry if people cannot survive because of the rents that they are paying. It doesn't matter. There is a private charity network there to pick up the slack that will take care of the problem, that will ensure that the misery of poverty is swept under the rug."

The issue facing this committee, I think, is very simple. Food banks arise because of poverty, because people do not have enough to live on. Poverty arises out of very clear political decisions that have been taken by successive governments in the province of Ontario. They are decisions even if they are decisions that have been taken by default.

I do not believe that my presentation here today is of itself going to change an enormous amount, but I do think it needs to be said to this committee and needs to be said to all parties represented here that the situation of mass poverty, of mass food bank dependency in this extremely wealthy province, has taken place, when all is said and done, because it has been calculated that poor people are largely helpless, largely powerless, largely voiceless.

I believe that situation is changing. I believe the three-pronged march that took place last year is testimony to the fact that is changing. I believe the emergence of our coalition is testimony to the fact that is changing. I have to tell you very frankly that poor people in this province have had all they can stand, that we are facing an ongoing and a deepening and a worsening crisis of poverty that has reached the point where tens of thousands of people have to live off charity.

We are not prepared to accept that. We are going to challenge that, and we are going to challenge that in a way that I do not believe the politicians at Queen's Park are going to be able to ignore.

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**Mr Allen:** John, I want to thank you, first of all, for a very trenchant and direct kind of analysis, if I can call it, from the

seat of the poor. We have heard a great deal in the course of the last day and a half and some of it has been pretty hard-hitting and unequivocal. I do not think anything has been more so than what you have just given to us. I wonder if you could tell us a little bit how the coalition foresees presenting the issue to the Ontario public with respect to the food bank and hunger question and the larger context of poverty?

**Mr Clarke:** I think in my opening remarks I suggested that the question was one of providing poor people with a voice, with the opportunity to speak out on a scale and in a fashion that has not taken place before. I think we see our role as being precisely to bring to the attention of the powers that be in the broader sense the fact that there is nothing particularly mysterious about the phenomenon of poverty and the phenomenon of food bank dependency.

This state of affairs, in our view, will continue as long as those who make the political decisions feel they can get away with perpetuating poverty, with perpetuating food bank dependency. We feel the issue is very simple. If people are given enough to live on, they are not going to have to go to food banks. We therefore see our role as ensuring that people do receive enough to live on, that employers pay at a scale directed by a provincially set minimum wage that enables people to live and enables people to live with dignity and adequacy, that those people who are forced to turn to social assistance receive an income that provides them with enough to feed their families and with enough to live decently, and that housing in this province does not consume an enormous portion of people's basic income. Those are the basic issues and I think challenging them is our basic task.

**Mr Allen:** Do you include in your remarks what some people have described to us as catching, at the end of the day, those individuals who may for various reasons, because they have been so damaged in the course of life, not be able to sort of handle their own affairs, so that therefore there is a need for some kind of stop-gap measure which is sort of the core, I guess the starting point of the food bank expansion with the Salvation Army, hostels and emergency food services of an older kind, the sort of the soup kitchen emergency crisis situation.

I ask you that because I am not sure whether we are getting into a little bit of semantic confusion in the whole issue around what we are trying to overcome and what we are not going to be able to do away with. Do you include those emergency food services in your rubric of overcoming and eliminating hunger in Ontario?

**Mr Clarke:** I suppose I would speculate that in an ideal society the need for even such charitable, philanthropic measures would not be there, but frankly, I do not think we are talking about any hard core group of disadvantaged or even possibly self-destructive individuals who may have to turn to emergency services. What we have arrived at is the state of affairs where food banks are beginning to become a mainstream experience for a poor population that is moving into the mainstream of society in terms of its numbers.

We are dealing with a situation where it becomes normal to turn to charity if you have to live on social assistance. It becomes, if not normal, than by no means unexceptional if you are working poor to have to turn to food bank services in order to survive. That, I think, is the issue we are immediately targeting. We are saying there have to be drastic improvements so that we can, if you like, bring the swelling down to that core, as an initial measure at least.

**Mr McGuinty:** John, I enjoyed your statement very much. Richard's reference to semantics, points to a concern and to a question I would pose. First of all, let me assure you that we are on the same wavelength. I think the mark of a just society is reflected in its concern for the elderly, the infirm, the handicapped and the poor, those who cannot speak up for themselves or who are not heard if they do.

You refer to the private charity network and you refer to private charity as inevitably leading to degradation and shame. In fact, and again it might be a matter of semantics, you use the word "charity" as though it were an uncomplimentary, pejorative term. I think of charity as one of the Christian virtues. I am not sure if, for example, the people I see, members of my own family, who spend extensive hours working in food banks in my city of Ottawa and indeed the people who avail themselves of those services suffer, as you refer, the degradation and shame that you attribute to them.

I am old enough to remember when people were given, not food stamps but what they called scrip. You were on relief; it was not called social assistance. I recall little kids going into a grocery store and being humiliated by putting that scrip on the counter. It could be exchanged for tea or sugar or salt, the assumption being that if it were cash the parents would take up to Grant's Hotel a few blocks away, where they sold beer in children's portions.

I recall that experience very well. Now supposing we had a situation in society where, as you say, there were just wages, an adequate minimum wage, enough work where people could earn a basic healthy and decent standard of living. There would still be the need, or there could be, that services be provided to provide extra, so to speak, and this would become public charity. It would become more formal, more controlled, more organized, more bureaucratic, all of these with the naïve assumption that it would be more efficient. So I am really, John—I am not in an argumentative vein—not quite sure why your view of, as you call it, private charity always is accompanied by a feeling of degradation and shame by those who avail themselves of it.

I see people coming into soup kitchens and they have a meal. I see in my own church that we gather articles of clothing and distribute them. We have canned food drives. We do it in our schools. Maybe I am out of touch; it has been a long time since I had the experience of abject poverty as a child. I can recall experiences of humiliation as a child—

**The Chair:** John, would you like to try and answer?

**Mr McGuinty:** I am not finished the question. Is there a question there?

**The Chair:** Mr McGuinty, I have another person.

**Mr McGuinty:** My question is, John, is there a question there?

**Mr Clarke:** Before dealing with the question of charity and degradation, let me just respond to your opening comment with regard to the question of the commitment to eradicate poverty. I do not question, sir, your personal integrity, but I must say that looking back over the historical period in which poverty has been engendered in this province, it has taken place under the political leadership of men and women who have had a verbal commitment to eradicating poverty and have been able to say the right things.

I think that is something we need to get out on the table here today, that it is not enough to have a commitment and be able to talk about a commitment to eradicating poverty. The



political measures that need to be taken are very simple and they need to be adopted now.

Now with regard to the question of whether charity is degrading. I do not seek to sneer at many, many people in this province who are responding to an emergency situation, who are very caring people and who seek to provide emergency services in the most humane and decent way they can. But I think it is undeniable and unavoidable that the situation where tens of thousands of people queue up in order to receive the basic necessities of life, the most basic necessity of life, food, is, however caring, however decent the people providing those services may seek to be—and they are not all caring and decent, I am afraid to tell you.

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**Mr McGuinty:** That is true.

**Mr Clarke:** However caring and decent people may be, it is, I say, a deplorable situation. It is a humiliating experience to have to go to a food bank and bow your head and receive other people's food handouts. It is a horrible state of affairs. I think it is nothing less than a blot on the society we live in, one that needs to be eradicated, one that needs to be targeted for drastic and immediate action.

**Mr McGuinty:** I appreciate your comments, John. Thank you.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** I have a short question, though maybe not an easy one. I always have difficulty though with people who distort first Corinthians, chapter 13 to be a translation of "charity" because I always thought the proper translation for that was "love" and that this is part of the whole burden of Christianity since the Wesleyan days.

**Mr McGuinty:** A theological lecture.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** I think, if anybody deserves a lecture, it is our part-time members taking so much time on this committee.

**Mr Allen:** It is the first time I have heard Wesley referred to around here.

**Mr McGuinty:** There was a reference to part-time members taking up too much time of the committee. Did that refer to somebody in particular?

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** That was directed at you. If you had any sensitivity as to the way you have performed today, you would understand.

**The Chair:** Please, gentlemen, I think John is here to present to us. If you want to speak about these other things, we should—

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** I want to ask you about our particular conundrum here, John, which is that although I think your analysis, as usual with you, as my colleague says, is straight to the point, our difficulty as a committee is going to be specific recommendations to do, I would hope, with how we get rid of the large social function of the food banks and how we do it in an orderly way that does not punish those who are now having to avail themselves of that because of the absence of government action.

We have had some evidence about how even a small downturn in numbers going, like 10 or 15 per cent, might in fact erode the whole private charity base to those organizations at this point. You may want to just keep out on the outer marge

of this position and keep it straight and clear that you just want us to end it, but from our perspective, if we are trying to come up with an all-party consensus on this, given the context we have here in terms of numbers, that may not be a possible recommendation that comes out of this report.

In fact, we may have to look at something like what steps, what targets can be established, what parts of Transitions need to be brought in, at the same time as we try to remove the necessity of the food banks, etc. I wonder if you are willing to engage in that part of the discussion; that is to say, talk about specific recommendations we might make, or whether you want to hold to the necessary polemic of saying these things need to be got rid of because of the thesis that you put forward.

**Mr Clarke:** I do not think I could say that I have the expertise to deal with the question of how adjustments could be made within the private charity network. It seems to me that the most useful role any member of this committee could play, even if consensus were not obtainable, would be to press home the basic and very simple point that income adequacy is the real question and that without it no real progress can be made. In fact, all you can do is contort and seek to respond to a situation that is completely untenable. I think the levels of increases we are talking about have to be drastic and those are the things that have to be driven home.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** Okay; thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, John Clarke. I am sure, from what you have said, we will be seeing you again.

**Mr Clarke:** I very much hope so.

**The Chair:** If I may inform the committee, the group from Windsor has not been able to arrange to be here due to some problems with the flight, so it is unfortunate that we will not hear from that part of the province. We may be able to suggest they send in the brief they were going to present. Would that be helpful? Maybe they could courier that to us.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** It would be useful. We have followed that centre now for a long time, because it was one of the first unemployment health centres that we had. The downturn in the economy in the early 1980s started in Windsor, of course, with the problems in the auto industry. Their long-time experience would be useful.

**The Chair:** I will ask our clerk to request that it be Purolator to us today and maybe she could distribute it tomorrow.

#### INTERFAITH SOCIAL ASSISTANCE REVIEW COALITION

**The Chair:** I call forward the Interfaith Social Assistance Review Coalition, please. I know you just arrived but the opportunity is here. Would you like to introduce yourselves to us, please, the members of the social development committee who are present? Your presentation is a 20-minute presentation. We usually like to have a few questions if that would be acceptable.

**Mr Pfrimmer:** Thank you very much for your invitation to be here. My name is David Pfrimmer. I am a Lutheran pastor and I am chairperson of the Interfaith Social Assistance Review Coalition. We have circulated to you a copy of our brief. We are not going to read the whole brief. You can look at it at your leisure. We will make a few remarks, though, and then maybe we can entertain some questions. I think we have made numerous submissions to you in various incarnations in other

arenas, so some of what we have to say is probably not news, but it is reality, for sure.

The other people on the delegation with me are Reverend Canon Robert Cuyler from the Anglican Diocese of Toronto; Jennifer Harris from Citizens for Public Justice; the Reverend Dr Ray Hodgson from the Presbyterian Church in Canada; the Reverend Bill Major from the Downtown Churchworkers Association; and Sister Sheila Wallace from the Canadian Religious Conference, Ontario Region.

When we have questions, those who are probably more knowledgeable in particular areas may respond.

As representatives of the faith communities in this province, we want to thank you for the opportunity to speak to this important issue, and for being able to be here to address the critical question of the role of food banks in our society and in our province.

We in the faith communities are concerned with the weak and the parentless, the needy and the orphaned, the oppressed people, the vulnerable people in Ontario. These are people who in increasing numbers are turning to food banks to feed themselves and to feed their children. We are pleased this committee is looking into this question and we are pleased to be able to speak with you and to the government of Ontario about what we feel is really a scandalous situation in our province.

That food banks should even exist in a province like this, which has so much and such prosperity—you need not walk too far down the streets of Toronto to see it—is surely an indictment of the failure of our society to be particularly concerned about those who are most vulnerable in our midst. It is also an indictment that after a period of unprecedented economic growth there are those who can enjoy this wealth, and there are those in increasing numbers who cannot.

Food banks, as you know, began in Ontario during the recession of 1981 to 1983. During that time many of the people, the religious people from our communities became involved as volunteers in organizing food banks across the province during that critical time. At that time there was growing unemployment, displacement of employees and increasing case loads for social assistance programs in this province.

As a temporary and emergency measure, food banks were seen to sort of fill the gap and there was certainly great enthusiasm in our communities to try to respond to the needs that were there, but it was an enthusiasm with the knowledge that changes needed to be made and were to come, where the existing system of social assistance could be readjusted and where there could be a recovery from the economic downturn. So they were very much perceived as a short-term emergency measure.

Times have changed for some and this year the Treasurer of the province has announced a balanced budget for the first time in 20 years. I think this is an obvious sign of the strength of our provincial economy. In a recent edition of Toronto magazine, a publication of the Globe and Mail, the city of Toronto was called the engine of the national economy. The article noted that 20 per cent of the nation's wealth is created in the general Toronto area.

However, this unprecedented growth is not wealth for everyone. The proliferation of food banks is testimony to this. The expected decreases in the uses of social assistance have not followed this economic recovery. The number of recipients of social assistance keeps growing, and the number of people using food banks as well. This is all in spite of the great turnaround for our economy. There must be a problem for us when so many have so much and so many do not have anything to eat.

The Interfaith Social Assistance Review Coalition believes that the problem is a problem of our social vision and our social priorities. While we affirm the need to strengthen the economy, we feel this must be in order to support the very community upon which the economy relies—workers and consumers. Premier Peterson said in a speech that he made but one year ago, "I believe that an economy without any coherent plan for its development and evolution is an economy heading for a disaster in today's changing world," and he continued, "I believe that a state that does not put the welfare of its most vulnerable members ahead of other considerations is a state that cannot justify its existence."

## 1500

We would agree with the Premier on both counts and therefore we would make the following recommendations, which are included at the back of our brief:

1. That the government of Ontario take responsibility for the weak and the vulnerable. Every effort must be made to eliminate the need for food banks in this province. Hunger is a shame for everyone, especially in times of such wealth.

2. That the province of Ontario move to eliminate the need for food banks, reducing the number of food banks to only those levels necessary for particular emergency situations.

3. That the social assistance rates be immediately raised to equal the poverty line, such as those determined by the Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto.

4. That the provincial government publicly mandate the Task Force on Food Banks, which already exists and which has come together under various leaderships of those people involved with food banks and has representatives from the Ministry of Community and Social Services, to develop a strategy to implement the above objectives.

Thank you again for the chance to be with you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Reverend Pfrimmer.

**Mr Neumann:** Could you elaborate a little bit on your knowledge of the work of the Task Force on Food Banks to which you refer?

**Canon Cuyler:** The Task Force on Food Banks has met only twice since the new year. It was what was called for after the daily bread food drive in October. It was asked that the provincial government convene a task force to seek the elimination of food banks. The request of Terry Finlay, Bishop of Toronto, was ignored. He reiterated the statement at New Year's and called the group together.

That group has met. There were over 40 people at the initial meeting. They mandated a task group. That task group has now met twice. It includes representatives from Comsoc, the business community, the labour unions, the recipients themselves, the users of food banks, and the churches and the food bank network. They are working very diligently at coming up with some kind of a process so that we can work towards the elimination of food banks, but it has no real mandate. That is what this is calling for, that the government mandate that group, which gives it a different emphasis entirely.

**Mr Neumann:** So the task force is self-generated; it arose out of expressions of the community. Has it set a time frame for a report?

**Canon Cuyler:** The task force must report back to the larger group. Hopefully we will be doing that some time in late April and then we will see where it goes. It has no real mandate. It is just an agreement among all of us that food banks are a



scandal and that they need to be eliminated over the next three to five years. We do not want to be too specific until we see what workable process can be agreed upon.

**Mr Allen:** I appreciate ISARC coming to make this presentation, because as you have indicated in your brief every time we turn around and look at a food bank, it seems to have a faith origin or a church origin of some description, even when it seems to have a secular name and not like St Anthony's Parish Food Bank or something of that order. I think we are all very much in debt to your community for the response to hunger and we are very much moved by the fact that you look beyond the immediate response mechanisms to really solving the problem.

Could I just ask you a question about the task force concept. Would that task force also be a group that would mobilize opinion in the churches for more fundamental solutions, or is it your sense that there already is a strong constituency of support in the churches for moving towards really fundamental income adequacy at the level of minimum wage improvements and social assistance supports?

**Ms Harris:** I am Jennifer Harris and I am functioning right now as the chair of the task force. I was asked to do so because it is a broader based group. It was not called specifically by the bishop, although he initiated the first meeting and he invited members of the provincial government to come. They have sent representatives and have continued to come.

One of the primary objectives of this task force is to develop a strategy to eliminate the need for food banks, but it is seen that a crucial part of that is to educate various communities as to why we must eliminate the need for food banks, how we can do that, and as well, the general community responsibility to accept the strategies we would be putting in place. Part of that, of course, would be to educate, I guess you would call it, the donor community, the volunteer community that has put so much energy into food banks, to educate them and help them educate themselves how to redirect those energies towards solutions that are of a more permanent nature.

Certainly, if food banks exist, they will always be used to a certain degree. It is important that the communities which have put so much energy into food banks redirect that energy elsewhere so that we can all be working in partnership. A very important part of the task force is the partnership of the directors of food banks, the churches, the provincial government, the corporate sector and so on. Education must come down from the task force and its members throughout all those sectors, or else it will always be seen as a lopsided effort.

**Mr Allen:** I guess I am asking you how much that job is necessary in the light of, for example, the broad acceptance of the SARC report and the proposals within it, which have some very clear income maintenance implications and proposals that need to be moved on. My sense was that the church communities had at least a fair sense of where that report was going and why.

Is it your impression that there is still need to educate? I think on the other hand that we have had people coming from food banks who have told us that the corporate sector has been responsive, that the church community seems to understand, that there is a public recognition of the problem of hunger and that the moment is now to act, not educate, because they have a sense that the education is done and the moment is now. I am not belittling education—far from it—and I appreciate what you are doing, but could you just help us on that point?

**Mr Pfrimmer:** Maybe I could respond because I think there is a critical point here that has to be made. Food banks are part of the charitable work of many religious organizations. I think what people are trying to come to grips with is the fact that they are a short-term measure; they are not designed for the long term. Clearly, most of the churches I know and many of the other religious communities also are pushing for an adequate income for people.

But during that period when people are trying to struggle, that is the kind of education that has to—how you move from that one moment. I guess people, at least in my community, are getting a little fed up with it being perceived strictly as a charity model, that we need to move to more structural provisions that guarantee the dignity of all people, so that they do not fall below a certain threshold of dignity.

Look at who uses the food banks. In Kitchener, for example, many people are working people. They are not people who are on benefits from a government program. They are working. They are contributing to this society, but they are not being paid enough for what they are doing to provide for their families.

Moving from the idea of charity, which is becoming offensive to people in the religious community because it is an excuse not to do what other sectors of the society ought to do, including government: that is, I think, the rub. I think, Richard, you are right. There is a broader analysis. Many people are already on board. They want someone to do something, but in the process of doing it, people want to understand the steps that are taken. They do not want more charity, that being the model held up, saying, all these great people who are volunteering to solve the problems of the world, because some of these problems require more than mere volunteers handing out food.

1510

**The Chair:** A one-line answer, if I may: We had a person from Toronto today talking about the role of the health council in public health in Toronto. Has the task force got representatives from that body, any of the public health—

**Ms Harris:** At the initial meeting, the large group which sanctioned the smaller, action oriented group, there was representation from Metropolitan Toronto, from Toronto, from public health, from the province, from all levels of government. The task group that is trying to develop a strategy has soon to report back to this larger group and to determine our next move.

**The Chair:** Okay; thank you.

**Mr McGuinty:** First, you scared the hell out of me with this statement from Isaiah. I recall the other passage from Isaiah, the responsibility "to undo the heavy burdens, and let the oppressed go free." Even those who do not realize that we are living in a society that is living off of the accumulated capital of Christianity and who do not subscribe to Christian views should be aware of what the origin of that concern is. It is not from any Aristotelian summation of human rights, nor is it from any naturalistic view of man. It is from the Judeo-Christian tradition, which has had the formative influence on our society. Anyway, having said that, I will take myself out of the classroom.

There is a distinction here. Reverend, you used the phrase three times, "eliminate food banks, eliminate food banks, eliminate food banks," whereas I think the issue here is to eliminate the need for food banks.

**Canon Cuyler:** Right.

**Mr McGuinty:** Fine. I think with due respect, sir, that in the way you phrase it there is quite a significant distinction between the two statements. Do you see the solution of this, the elimination of the need, simply within the control of government to increase social assistance rates immediately to equal the poverty line? Does the government have the authority and the power and indeed the resources?

I have been a politician for only three years. Prior to that, I spent 45 years studying the influence of the Judeo-Christian tradition on western culture. Do you see that government has the resources to solve this problem and to solve the need for food banks simply by increasing social assistance rates, or would you envision also that the government has a responsibility to intrude into the free working of the marketplace, such as we still have in our society. If we are not willing to do that—there is no one party here with a social conscience, contrary to the myth that some would promulgate.

**The Chair:** Mr McGuinty, would you please pose a question? We have two other people.

**Mr McGuinty:** I find the guests are interested in what I am saying, Madam Chair. I wish you would not distract them.

My question is, would you find a two-pronged approach, increasing the assistance rates and then going into the marketplace as well and having more control over, for example, the practical thing of the minimum wage, affirmative action carried through more adequately and give women the rightful place they deserve in the workforce, overcome the systemic, antifeminist views that we have rooted in our culture, partly through the effect of the churches, I might say, Catholic especially—

**Canon Cuyler:** I think we would agree that all of those are major needs in our society that need to be addressed. I think in our brief today we were merely addressing the food banks, as that was the focus for this particular task force. Certainly we would be glad to speak to those other issues, but we did not feel that was appropriate today.

**Mr Pfrimmer:** I think the other point is that we are in a broader consultative process. This presentation is part of what is going to become, I think, a larger process which we will render as a conclusion. But I might add to your analysis there that I think it is our opinion that the free market does not have an inalienable right to exist. The free market in classical economic thinking, and economists are agreed on this, is to provide for the wellbeing of all those within it, so I think you would run a real risk in talking about rights around the free market to exist and to do its own thing without intrusion. When you say that, you have to recognize that there are certain responsibilities—

**Mr McGuinty:** There are no absolute rights, in the free market. I agree completely.

**Mr Pfrimmer:** I think we are saying that within the rights of individual choice, there is a certain threshold below which people, if they fall, in terms of their participation in society—economically, politically, socially—that violates the dignity of God that is imbedded in everyone whether they are confessing Christian, Jew, Muslim or whatever. I guess that is the fundable point and the government, as we see it, needs to make sure that it respects and legally enforces a threshold so that dignity is not violated. That is not a religious principle; it is a moral, legislative principle.

**Mr McGuinty:** You allayed my apprehension about Isaiah's injunction. Thank you very much, Reverend.

**The Chair:** Reverend, you wanted to make a statement.

**Mr Major:** I am Bill Major. I would like to respond to your question. I think it is a good question and it is one that we raise ourselves as we meet. Every week I go out and meet with people who are in food bank programs, and person after person is telling me now a very similar story. I have met many, for example, women who receive \$1,200 or \$1,300 a month from family benefits who have to turn around and pay \$900 for a two-bedroom apartment in Toronto and feed two, three or four children as well. That is an impossible situation for any of us.

I think we often conclude that two fundamental problems with food banks are inadequate incomes and excessive shelter costs. My hope for the government would be, as we have said, an increase in social assistance rates to provide people with adequate income, an increase in the minimum wage to provide the working poor with adequate income and a new commitment to social housing. If we do not have social housing, we are not going to attack the food bank problem. We just must provide, especially in large centres, more adequate, affordable forms of nonprofit housing.

**Mr McGuinty:** As Polonius would say, a fitting and a fair reply.

**The Chair:** Mr Johnston and Mr Faubert would still like to question. We have about four minutes left. I am going to ask you to be as succinct as possible.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** Just as succinct as the previous questioner, I am sure. My question is essentially this: If this modest committee's recommendation is in fact to endorse a public mandate for your group, your task force, to come up with a strategy specifically around the elimination of the need for food banks, what kind of guidelines do you think we should be trying to put down? Should we be making references to the Transitions report? What are the confines of what we are talking about. When Bill talks, he is talking about the whole major mix of economic and social programs that had been advocated elsewhere, including in Transitions.

I am wondering if you could give us a little bit of an idea, because it might be a useful framework for us to be able to use. What kind of mandate should we be asking you to have? How does that have to change with your present process, if you are already meeting with ministry officials? We do not know who yet; maybe you will tell us. How does that reporting back get official status, because surely that is something the legislative committee would want your group to have.

**Ms Harris:** I think it is important to note that of course we are always working on a basis that is the Transitions report. We are addressing reforming social assistance and social assistance rates and their impact on poverty in this province. But one of the more important elements of the task force is the fact that we have much broader representation than you normally see in a group that is addressing the elimination of the need for food banks.

We have a representative from the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Toronto, and we are seeking to get more of the corporate community involved, as well as have people from the provincial government and advocacy groups and so on. We will have to, and we are in the process now of drafting objectives that will include reforming social assistance and social housing, as Bill has talked about, the things that are particularly the mandate of the provincial government.

We are also talking about the responsibility of the private sector to work in partnership, not only with the task force but in



some systemic changes in the way they function that will, as well, work towards the elimination of the need for food banks. As David mentioned, a lot of food bank users, an increasing number, are working. That is not a problem about social assistance rates themselves; it is a problem about inadequate incomes. There has to be a mandate, as well, from the corporate community to address those problems.

1520

We are very open, as we were drafting our objectives, for the input of this group, from individual members and from the group itself, as to what areas we should be looking at. We are just starting. We are very excited about the process and the mandate, the moment to do this. It seems as though it is one of the most important things any of us can do right now because it is pulling together the major stakeholders in our society, when you are talking about the government, the corporate sector, the churches and so on.

**Mr Faubert:** Just quickly clarify for me, if you would, is the Interfaith Social Assistance Review Coalition part of the Ontario SARC Network, or do you work in parallel with them?

**Mr Pfrimmer:** We are part of that. In many senses, we collaborate. In fact, what we are doing now is consulting with a whole variety of groups, some that are within that network as well as other networks of people who are concerned about these issues.

**Mr Faubert:** You reinforce their position, I take it, from the last answer about the corporate sector responsibility, as it is put here, support for the supports to employment program, plus other employment support and opportunity planning programs. That is part of your overall strategy and that is what you are bringing forward.

**Mr Pfrimmer:** I think I should also share that we are sort of in a consultative phase now and are developing a longer analysis with specific recommendations that we will be bringing forward. It might be useful to this committee, although we were asked to speak specifically about the symptom of food banks, that we are developing a broader analysis of what needs to be done. One cannot just think about that isolated phenomenon. What we are trying to do is broaden that and I think we would be happy to share that, if we develop anything more extensive, with your committee, to send to you or whatever when that is released.

**The Chair:** That is exactly the request I was going to make. We would like you to keep us abreast of what you are doing. You do sound like you are on the edge of something pretty significant. We would also like you, if you could and if you would, to present us with a list of the committee that you have as an outer committee and the inner core committee that are working together. We would like to know the stakeholders.

**Ms Harris:** On the task force itself?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Ms Harris:** Certainly; that is no problem.

**The Chair:** That would be very helpful. If you would send them to our committee clerk, that would be the appropriate manner in which we would receive them. I thank you all very much. You certainly have brought another perspective.

**Mr Pfrimmer:** Thank you for your time and we wish you well in your deliberations.

**The Chair:** I hope you will enjoy the rest of the day. I am going to have to return to Ottawa. I will be back by Thursday morning.

#### ONTARIO COUNCIL OF AGENCIES SERVING IMMIGRANTS

**The Vice-Chair:** Our next delegation is the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, sometimes referred to as OCASI. Would the representatives of this organization come forward. We have allotted 20 minutes for your presentation and some members of the committee may wish to ask questions during that 20-minute period. We would appreciate it if you would keep your overall presentation shorter than that. Would you introduce the delegation?

**Mr Sinclair-Jones:** My name is Howard Sinclair-Jones. I am the executive director of OCASI, the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants.

**Ms Isaac:** My name is Barbara Isaac. I am a board member of OCASI.

**Ms Rubio:** My name is Consuelo Rubio and I am from the Centre for Spanish Speaking Peoples which is a member of the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants.

**Mr Sinclair-Jones:** I will just give a little bit of introduction to OCASI and then leave it to Consuelo and Barbara to address the broader issue.

OCASI is an association of 108 community-based immigrant service agencies throughout the province of Ontario. We have member agencies in virtually every major community in the province from Thunder Bay to Kenora, Kingston, Ottawa, Windsor, Hamilton, and of course here in Metro Toronto where we have something like 70 of our member agencies.

They are all community-based independent agencies. They serve a very wide range of immigrants from just about every single country in the world. They vary in size from very large agencies, such as COSTI-IIAS Immigrant Services, which I think is the biggest immigrant service agency in North America, never mind in Canada, on the one hand; on the other hand we have tiny little agencies with only a couple of staff. What they all have in common is that they are based in their community and they are trying to meet the needs and provide services to newcomers, immigrants and refugees from all over the world.

The types of services they provide include language and orientation classes, individual and family counselling, interpretation, translation, legal services, information referral, advocacy work on behalf of individuals, a lot of employment and job counselling and health care services. Each year our network provides assistance to some 300,000 individuals in the province of Ontario.

Like any other Ontarians, many immigrants and refugees find themselves in situations, due to family breakdown and health situations, the economic situation as a whole or other life crises where they find themselves in poverty. Living on social assistance or working in poverty, immigrants share the range of concerns faced by poor people in Ontario. In addition to that they face a range of specific problems related to immigration status, related to discrimination, related to racism, language and cultural barriers.

It is in this context that we want to discuss the concerns of this committee, the existence of food banks and the situation immigrants find themselves in within the social assistance system.

I will pass over to Barb and Consuelo to address the broader issue.

**Ms Isaac:** As Howard said, at OCASI we see poverty as a critical issue for immigrants and refugees. In light of this, we worked quite closely with the Social Assistance Review Committee to establish a multicultural advisory group.

This group brought together representatives of 15 organizations which serve immigrants. The advisory group reviewed the presentations and briefs that looked at issues of immigrants and poverty. There were over 100 submissions relating to immigrant and refugees and poverty.

Based on comments made over and over again by agencies and individuals across the province, a clear consensus emerged from the many presentations and briefs. The primary one is that the social assistance system is not meeting basic needs, for food, shelter, health care, clothing and transportation.

The social assistance system lacks sensitivity and compassion. Discrimination is pervasive and systemic. Many instances were noted. The social assistance system lacks consistency between and even within municipalities. Working at the Immigrant Women's Health Centre, I can tell you that if I have to send a client who lives in Scarborough to see a welfare worker, I have to check with the welfare worker to make sure that she is getting everything that is entitled to her and I have to check also within Toronto because different offices will say different things to people. Whether they are refugees, refugee claimants, immigrants, sponsored immigrants, they are getting different messages depending on which office they go to. That has to change. There has to be consistent service no matter where you are within Ontario.

There has to be better communication within the benefits system itself, because the recipients need to know that they are getting consistent and effective service.

## 1530

The failure of the system is exacerbated for specific groups that face discrimination on the basis of their immigration status, so that sponsored immigrants get different information and a different type of service, domestic workers get a different type of service and refugee claimants get a different type of service.

Again, in my work at the Immigrant Women's Health Centre, often we have to refer people to food banks. This is a completely intolerable situation. This really has to change. Many of our agencies which also have a mandate to assist with the community and social service needs of immigrants are referring their clients to food banks as well. We are beginning to see that what used to be an emergency kind of situation is now becoming institutionalized and something we recommend to clients on a daily basis.

According to our membership survey carried out last year, 21 per cent of immigrant-serving agencies are now providing food as an emergency service to our communities. These are not just agencies in the city of Toronto and the city of North York, but also agencies in Guelph, Windsor, Thunder Bay, Belleville, Sudbury, Kitchener and Ottawa. For the rest of immigrant service agencies that do not provide food directly to their clients, they increasingly play a role in referring people to food banks, as I just mentioned. More and more immigrants and refugees are turning to food banks in an effort to make ends meet.

New applicants for general welfare assistance are provided by their workers with a list of food banks. This is an explicit admission that food banks have become institutionalized as part of the social assistance system, and as I said before, this is intolerable.

OCASI supports the assessment of food banks contained in the Transitions report. I will leave it to Consuelo to review our position on the Transitions report.

**Ms Rubio:** We were very involved in the process that led eventually to the release of Transitions. As Howard mentioned, we worked very closely with the committee and the multicultural subcommittee and we made a number of recommendations in our subcommittee that were later adopted by the Social Assistance Review Committee.

We have found it very disheartening that the Liberal government and the Minister of Community and Social Services have implemented very few of the recommendations that we submitted. In particular, we refer to the ones related to sponsored immigrants. Over the days you have probably heard how inadequate assistance is for people who can get it. In fact, many of our clients are not even entitled to assistance because they were sponsored by their relatives to Canada. As you probably know, if a relative brings you to Canada as a sponsored relative or an assisted relative, that person is responsible for you for up to 10 years. If you do not have any source of income, either through employment or any other source of income, basically you have nothing.

To me, it seems paradoxical that the provincial government has implemented universal health coverage and at the same time there is not anything similar to cover food and shelter, which in my view are just as basic needs. That means that if you have to go to the hospital, they will take really good care of you, but until you get there you are not entitled to anything if you are a sponsored immigrant.

The problem we have with sponsored immigrants is that many of them are older people. I mentioned to Howie and Barbara a case I have actually seen these days of a 70-year-old woman who was sponsored by her son to Canada five years ago. She has been in Canada for that long, but because of how long it takes to become a landed immigrant in Canada, she was only landed three months ago. The son has been responsible for her all these years and he still has another 10 years to go.

This woman, who as I say is 70 and worked up until last November when she had a heart attack, is not able to work. The son has more children than he did when he first sponsored her and finds that he cannot really provide the money for her rent, which as you know is high in Toronto in particular. It is about \$400. This woman has been dependent on the little money she gets from her son, food banks for food and the goodwill of her landlord who has said, "Okay, I will wait until your situation improves to get new rent."

We are also very concerned about another recommendation contained in the report. There were several recommendations we made regarding refugees that were only implemented by the provincial government after a lot of coaxing from community groups, basically appealing every time a refugee was denied assistance until finally they decided to change the policy.

There are other recommendations that have not been implemented. I realize they are not up to the provincial government, such as pressuring the federal government to issue work permits to all the refugee claimants in the backlog. Those people are still without work permits and have to rely on social assistance and food banks to live when they can go and work. We would urge you to put pressure on the federal government and the provincial government to effect the changes that we recommended two years ago.

**The Chair:** Thank you. Does that conclude your presentation?



**Mr Sinclair-Jones:** Yes, basically. I just add that we do have fundamental concerns about the social assistance system and the inadequacy of that which leads to people in our constituency having to depend more and more on food banks. We really do support the recommendation in the Transitions report which stated clearly that food banks should not be seen as part of the essential social assistance system, and every effort should be made to eradicate them as a necessary factor.

**The Chair:** We have some people on the committee who would like to ask questions and I thank you for leaving some time for that.

**Mr Allen:** I appreciate that for the community you serve, refugees and recent immigrant groups, there may well be other reasons than those we have heard from other groups for the patronizing of food banks. I have heard you with respect to the sponsorship problem, for example. I must say I have been astonished that the government has not responded to the group of recommendations that was directed specifically at the needs of immigrant and refugee groups. I do understand that one.

Is there an emerging pattern of a fairly distinct series of problems for people who go to the food bank services your agencies now provide that is somewhat different in character than the predominant ones in the rest of the community?

**Ms Rubio:** I think something that is very typical of our communities is that they have a lot of newcomers. They have accessed the rental market late in the game, so now they have to pay an incredible amount in rent. So all their money goes out to rent and that is why they have to depend and rely so heavily on food banks. Literally, some of the clients do rounds of the food banks. They will go to this one and then they will go to that one, because honestly they could not feed their children or themselves unless they do this. So in the last few years—

**Mr Allen:** If I can stop you on that for the moment, I presume what you are saying is that although people who have been out there renting for some time may be in that bracket where they can get something, say, for \$500 or \$600 a month, if you are coming new on the market, we all know that what is out there for new rental is probably maybe \$300 more than that for the same kind of rental. Is that what you are referring to?

**Ms Rubio:** That is exactly what I am saying. People live in basement apartments, a one-bedroom basement apartment, damp, disgusting, and they pay \$700 or \$800 a month for it. How can you live?

1540

**Mr Sinclair-Jones:** I think there is also a systemic problem which we see as immigrant service agencies in terms of dealing with the entire social assistance system, and that eventually leads to having to depend on things like food banks. One of the realities of our agencies is that they provide a tremendous amount of social assistance services to the immigrant communities.

Our recent survey indicated that more than 80 per cent of our member agencies are providing services which fall under the general area of social service, yet less than 20 per cent of our member agencies receive any funding whatsoever from the Ministry of Community and Social Services, so that in addition to the individual immigrant's difficulties with access to the system, the agencies that are helping those individuals to get that access themselves are being told: "You are not eligible for services. You are not eligible for this, that or the other."

There is a particular type of problem we have to deal with. I think the framework of that is rather ironic given that the government has a multicultural strategy which is supposedly designed to provide equal access across all the different government programs, but it is patently inadequate in this area.

**Mr Allen:** I presume there are a number of issues around culturally sensitive delivery of services that hang in there in that remark. Could I ask you also whether the issue of minimum wage is especially relevant for certain groups of recently arrived immigrant communities?

**Ms Rubio:** Yes, that is an issue, particularly because of the types of jobs that newly arrived immigrants have and immigrants who have no language skills stay in even after years of being in Canada, as just cleaners and other service occupations. The salaries for those occupations, as we all know, are very low.

**Mr D. W. Smith:** In a lot of the presentations everybody refers to the cost of housing. I do not know whether this could even be done or whether it is being done to a degree, but do you think housing should be scrutinized a little more closely and the conditions of the housing should be on a graduated scale where—I know this is certainly treading on the landlords, likely—if housing does not live up to a certain condition, there is no way they could charge a higher rent than X dollars?

I do not know whether that is being done to some degree now, or whether it could even be done, but everybody talks about what they have to pay towards housing. I have heard people say that for a very, very tiny room with not the very best of conditions, it sounds like to me, they could possibly pay as high as \$700 a month. Is there any way, in your opinion, that this could be screened better? Maybe there has to be criteria developed for a room or a house or an apartment.

**Ms Rubio:** I think there should be a will to improve housing, period. You know that there is supposed to be a rent registry right now, but I do not think that is working very well. Even though your suggestion might be valuable, I would not like to sort of create another bureaucracy to police housing. Why does the government not build more affordable housing and then we do not have to worry about all these landlords who are charging \$800 for a basement apartment? I think that would be easier, rather than allocating the resources to a new bureaucracy to police existing housing which is not adequate, period. Those resources could be allocated to build new affordable housing for people who are waiting.

**Mr D. W. Smith:** Okay. The other thing is that you talked about immigration, and I will state that I believe generally it is a federal responsibility, but to let me understand a little bit more about how an immigrant comes in, do they not have to have a job when they come into the country, or what percentage of the people who do come in do not have jobs guaranteed when they get here? That is maybe the most important, the percentage of the immigrants who come in who do not have jobs when they get here.

**Ms Rubio:** I can give you figures. For instance last year, in 1989, the government's projections were between 150,000 and 160,000. Out of those, 57,000 were what they call family class. People in family class are close relatives of Canadian citizens or permanent residents, so they do not have to have points to come in. Their relationship with a Canadian citizen or permanent resident is enough to guarantee entrance admission. Okay? Those are the people we are concerned about. The sponsorship one, when a sponsor says, "I want to bring my mother

in," the sponsor signs an agreement with the federal government that says that he or she will have to take care of his or her mother for a period of up to 10 years.

**Mr D. W. Smith:** With no benefits, or with some?

**Ms Rubio:** With no benefits.

**Mr D. W. Smith:** Up to 10 years.

**Ms Rubio:** Up to 10 years. The policy is that social assistance is usually given after five years.

**Mr D. W. Smith:** So somebody could stretch it.

**Ms Rubio:** But for at least five years, you do not get anything. That is what it is.

**The Vice-Chair:** Mr Smith, we still have some questioners.

**Mr D. W. Smith:** Sorry. I got some answers out there that I wanted.

**The Vice-Chair:** Perhaps we can get back to you if there is time. Mr McGuinty is next.

**Mr McGuinty:** There are two short observations and one question. Mr Sinclair-Jones, first of all, I liked very much your use of the word "systemic." It is the third time it has been used today and it is very significant because it denotes a mindset that we have to contend with, and we really cannot legislate overnight all the changes that should be made in this area.

Secondly, regarding the immigration, that purely is a federal matter. I deal with that, though, with my federal colleague in my own riding and I have the greatest sympathy. I think that idea of new Canadians having to serve a time here before they become eligible for benefits should be as dead as a dodo. I never liked that phrase "new Canadian." My grandfather cut his farm out of the bush 90 years ago. He was a new Canadian, and we are all new Canadians.

Now my question. May I ask some questions, Mr Chairman? Ms Isaac, specifically now with reference to the hunger banks that we are alluding to, are there any specific impediments in the way of immigrants which prevent them from availing themselves of that service, as would any other resident of Canada? I know quite surely there are no qualifications for going to a food bank. Surely; say it is not so.

**Ms Isaac:** There are some.

**Mr McGuinty:** What are they?

**Ms Isaac:** People approach a food bank not being able to speak the language. I think that is definitely a problem.

**Mr McGuinty:** Yes; but would your agency have facilities to help these people?

**Ms Isaac:** Some agencies do, but the idea is that we want people to be able to have money to purchase the food that they need. If someone is from a culture that is vegetarian or he eats a particular kind of food, what is donated out of the goodness of somebody's heart is not necessarily appropriate for his diet or somebody else's diet. I think that is a problem. It is not something that we want to dwell on, but it is a problem.

**Mr McGuinty:** It is a real problem.

**Ms Isaac:** There is the language accessibility. Also, the idea of going to a food bank, at least in the West Indian background—we do not feel it is appropriate to do that. I would wonder how many West Indian people actually use food banks,

because the food would not be appropriate. The idea of going to a food bank does not seem to make sense. These are people who are used to living very close to the land and also helping their neighbour. If you do not have something, your neighbour will certainly give it to you, and the next time, you return the favour.

**Mr McGuinty:** Sure. One of the wonderfully refreshing things I see around Toronto and in my own city of Ottawa is when you have the ethnic food outlets developing, stores which cater to the needs of people, be it from the West Indies or other parts of the world. Would it be feasible for your organization to have a food bank or to emphasize to people who operate food banks the desirability of having the type of need that you allude to so appropriately in mind?

**Ms Isaac:** No; we do not want to have food banks around long enough to become culturally appropriate.

**Mr McGuinty:** All right. Okay.

**Ms Isaac:** I think this is to say we work on eliminating food banks and not work on making them sensitive to different cultures and races.

**Mr McGuinty:** A fitting and a fair reply. Thank you very much.

1550

**The Vice-Chair:** Questions from Mr Faubert. I should mention to the committee before you ask your question that we have exhausted the time of this delegation and I have been lenient because our last delegation that we were to hear today, the Native People's Parish, has not shown up yet. So we will take one more question.

**Mr Faubert:** Actually, it is not a question. It is just something I am asking OCASI to do. It is something that I just received the information on today. Because housing and cost of housing is one of the great problems, it causes a need for food banks. The city of Scarborough has a study coming forward on intensification, duplexing and basement apartments and all the aspects of housing, and because there is exploitation of housing, substandard housing and all those problems that you alluded to in your presentation.

If you write to the city of Scarborough planning department, I think you could be of great assistance in making a presentation to some of those meetings, talking about the need for housing. There is a great conflict in the city as to even whether it is even going to recognize the need for housing. The need for single's housing, which is illegal under suburban zoning bylaws, is something else that you can talk about. That is the type of presentation I would really urge you to do. You can do a great service not only to the city but to Metropolitan Toronto.

**The Vice-Chair:** Mr Sinclair-Jones, do you have a reaction to that?

**Mr Sinclair-Jones:** Not so much a reaction; I think it is a very useful suggestion. If we are about to close, I would just like to make a comment in response to some of Mr McGuinty's remarks, which I think are very positive comments about the benefits of immigration and the recognition of the origins of all people in Ontario, apart from the native people, and very well founded.

I just wanted to stress, however, that although immigration itself is a federal responsibility, once people arrive here they become taxpayers in whichever municipality or province they



happen to be in, and Ontario owes its economic prosperity, in part, to the fact that it gets the bulk of all the immigration to Canada. That, in fact, I know from talking to immigration officials—we have been doing consultations across the country in the last month or so—is the envy of many parts of the country where there is very little immigration and there is also very high unemployment.

There is, in fact, an inverse correlation between the two things: the higher the level of immigration, the more dynamic the economy, the lower the level of employment. I wanted to just mention that Ontario does have a very real debt, if you like, to its newcomers, who bring human resources and capital with them, who spend and create jobs when they first arrive and who in fact have much lower levels of unemployment than the native-born Canadian community.

One of the difficulties we find is that we are not just dealing with the small percentage of immigrants who are unemployed, but we are dealing with quite a large number of immigrants who are underemployed or who are employed in jobs which pay the worst wages. The average wage of immigrants, incidentally, is higher than the average wage of native-born Canadians, but when you look at it from a country-of-origin perspective, language-group perspective, male-female perspective, you see a tremendous disparity. There are many people who are immigrants who are living in extreme poverty, and I think social assistance and social services are a provincial responsibility.

**Mrs Fawcett:** In the food bank in Cobourg, I know they usually have simmering sort of the recipe of the week which people can taste, and it is usually a very economical recipe that stretches far. Do you feel that this is a problem, that even if people, let's say, do have very limited funds or if they go to the food bank, they do not know how to really make the best use of the food?

Do other food banks do this, where they try to instruct people how to use what is there, or should another agency be doing that kind of thing where you would instruct people how to use the food?

**Mr Sinclair-Jones:** I think, as Barbara said, the fundamental problem is the existence of food banks.

**Mrs Fawcett:** Yes, I realize that.

**Mr Sinclair-Jones:** Even though they have to exist as a necessary evil and certainly, in my view, as a temporary measure, not as a fundamental part of the social assistance system. Then, yes, let us look at those secondary factors.

It is certainly true that if you are of Islamic background and you go into a food bank where they are cooking a nice stew made from pork or whatever, you are not going to be too pleased about eating it. That is the way it is. Certainly, many of the types of food which are donated are not necessarily always the most nutritious or food which is even considered to be food by people in certain parts of the world.

**Mrs Fawcett:** I just meant this for the regular, ordinary food bank, with just an ordinary recipe that would appeal the majority of the people. I mean, they just do this as an extra. I just wondered, is that the real value? Then they try to instruct as to wise shopping, if they can have some funds in order to do this.

**Ms Rubio:** There are times so often that there is nothing to stretch, you see.

**Mrs Fawcett:** Yes, I realize that.

**Ms Rubio:** That is the problem. The problem is that after you pay your rent, you cannot stretch anything, even if you eat bread and peanut butter. That is probably what you will be eating at the end of the month anyway. So even if you are the most wonderful Minister of Finance, what can you do with 50 bucks?

**Mr Sinclair-Jones:** I think in general you would find that among the immigrant communities you have some of the most thrifty people in the country.

**Mrs Fawcett:** That is true, yes.

**Mr Sinclair-Jones:** There is not a lot of waste. People are extremely cost conscious and they do not like waste.

**Mrs Fawcett:** Sometimes they can do the teaching.

**Mr Sinclair-Jones:** Waste is a very North American-born concept.

**The Vice-Chair:** I am going to ask that the time conclude for your presentation and questions.

**Mr D. W. Smith:** We can't have a clarification, Mr Chair-man?

**The Vice-Chair:** Perhaps you could meet outside and get it clarified. We have gone quite a bit overtime with this delegation, and I have allowed that because our last presenter was not here. But he has now arrived, so we will ask him to come forward and thank you very much for coming before us. I know of the good work you do and I am sure your presentation will be most helpful to the committee in its deliberations.

**Mr Sinclair-Jones:** We have tabled a brief which is about a year old to the Minister of Community and Social Services, which is quite relevant to this.

**The Vice-Chair:** All right. Thank you very much.

We could ask Mr Froh to come forward. While he is doing that, I will mention a couple of things. First of all, a reminder that Thursday's schedule will begin at 11:30 with a meeting of the subcommittee. At 1:30 we will have a presentation from Sudbury, and at 1:45 the full committee will begin its deliberations on the preparation of the report. It is committee room 2, not this room.

I would also like to point out that I will have to leave early for a ride back to my constituency. Mrs Fawcett has agreed to chair when I have to leave.

JAMES FROH

**The Vice-Chair:** Mr Froh, we will allow you 20 minutes. I apologize for our decimated numbers, but your full presentation will be recorded in Hansard and become part of the record and part of our consideration.

**Mr Froh:** Thank you. My delay was transportation problems.

**The Vice-Chair:** We understand. We all experience that.

**Mr Froh:** This was quite unusual for me. It was an assault on the streetcar, so the police and inspectors were involved, and much time.

**The Vice-Chair:** Unfortunate.

**Mr Froh:** My name is James Froh. I am a Metis and a member of Toronto's Native People's Parish. I am the pastor presently there. I appreciate this opportunity to speak to you concerning the crisis of hunger in Ontario and how it impacts

on the native community in Metropolitan Toronto. I would also like to raise some questions about the goal of this committee's hearings and concerns which I hope will be addressed to the government.

I would like to say my perceptions and views have been very much influenced by my living and working among the native peoples within the church and the broader community here in Toronto. I do not consider myself a spokesperson for the native community. There are many people who are very capable of speaking for themselves and their organizations.

I will begin my presentation by saying the government programs continue to fail to meet the most serious needs of Canada's first nations, in particular, housing and employment opportunities. There is a great misconception that governments are improving the social and economic quality of life of first nations. Since 1984, we have seen a steady decline in revenues for programs because of government refusals to compensate for inflation and for population growth among the native communities. I quote Georges Erasmus.

The majority of our people now live off reserve in Ontario. The present budget cuts by the federal government are going to hit this particular group very hard, and especially here in Metro Toronto, where costs are the highest in the province. I come to you with some cynicism of governments', communities' and churches' inability or unwillingness to deal with the present crisis of hunger. I am amazed and angered at the present government's refusal to even minimally implement the Social Assistance Review Committee's recommendations. I am wondering whether this committee is once again going to reflect on the current problem but fail to find lasting, practical solutions to ensure that Canadians in Ontario do not go hungry.

## 1600

The question that I ask myself is, what is the vision of the good of feeding the hungry? How does it develop the whole person? How does it develop the community?

The primary relationship of food to the earth is central to native people's understandings of the Creator, of the land, of the environment and of ourselves. Food is also central to our parish Christians. "Give us today our daily bread," the second part of the Lord's Prayer, which Jesus taught his disciples and which all Christians repeat faithfully each day, begins with this petition to the Almighty. This one petition is uttered by all men and women and children of different races and nations who comprise the Christian church. For many, it has the sound of confidence and peace, and for many others it is a cry of grief and pain because they are unable to satisfy this physical hunger due to the real lack of necessary food.

In Toronto, we rejoice in the marvels of economic development and technology, and with good reason, but we must advance and develop in a human way. We cannot remain passive or indifferent in the face of the tragedy of so many people who lack sufficient food. With one in every four or five people you see in food banks being children, it is the children's development that concerns me most.

Food banks have popularized in an immediate and visual way the enormous problem of hunger in Toronto society. We all know this. As politicians, you will also know that social assistance, unemployment and fixed income benefits are inadequate to put sufficient food on the table, a roof over people's heads and clothes on their backs. Food banks remind us natives that underemployment and unemployment, lack of affordable housing and current immigration regulations remain key social, economic and political problems for us and for other Canadians.

Not only for single, able-bodied men but, more significantly, for the disabled, for visible minorities, women, children and the elderly.

Metro Toronto's native people come to the urban environment primarily from within the boundaries of Ontario. About 90 per cent of all native people living in Toronto come from within the province. People come to the city for jobs, education, health and social reasons, but the first experience in Metro is bewilderment and cultural shock. As doors close in on my people's hope for a satisfying and quality life in Toronto because of lack of skills and education, racial prejudice and isolation, native people in turn lead into substandard living conditions, and this includes hunger.

The vast majority of Toronto's 40,000 native peoples are living in substandard housing. This link to underemployment and unemployment and other social and economic problems experienced by first nation people creates a crisis for so many people who lack sufficient food, who are forced to live on a subsistent diet and who consequently encounter almost insurmountable obstacles to their proper development every day.

We must also keep in mind factors like geographic dispersion and isolation of the native community. It keeps native people one of Toronto's least visible minorities. Mobility of people from reserve to cities, poverty and poor relations of individuals with native and non-native organizations all hamper the provision of services and resources to native people from different service agencies, including food banks.

Most community organizations also have punitive staff or volunteers. This just compounds the problems of poor relations with native Canadians. Many urban native youths are further isolated from the native community by removal from children's aid societies and adoption in non-native families. This is changing, but too many youths need other possibilities than the confines of street life, which offers nothing but despair and, for many, death. I do not know if you know, but seven young native people died last year on Toronto streets. To me, this is intolerable. If we continue to delay, for some it will be too late. They go through the system or simply remain on the streets until they are finally in the courts and do time in correctional institutions. I remind you that Toronto has the second highest rate of imprisonment of native peoples in the province of Ontario, and I believe that if the real figures were known, it would be higher.

Food banks, besides responding to acute and pressing needs, also turn political attention away from the long-reaching and urgent reforms needed. Food banks are not able to meet known, existing emergency food needs, let alone the unknown ones. Food banks keep church and community organizations from other important activities and priorities. The service providers also use food banks, and the governments have all grown in the dependency of relying on this short-term emergency response to hunger. It has been too long.

Many people just develop a further distrust of politicians and those who provide services, who cannot or will not take the public responsibility for people's right to adequate and nourishing food. I have heard from some of my native brothers and sisters. They say the food banks are good in one way, especially when no food is in the house to feed the kids at the end of the month. Yet these same people say food banks are bad because once you start using them, you become dependent on them.

Native people resent having to line up for food. They resent the shame of their inability to support the families they love. I urge you to encourage all organizations fighting hunger to find new initiatives and to support the existing programs.



I draw your attention to the needs of the poor, that they be given priority over the wants of the rich. The participation of marginalized groups, and here read "first nations," takes priority over the preservation of an order which excludes them. I call upon you to address this critical problem without delay, specifically by implementing SARC's recommendations.

In closing, I place before you with great concern and great hope this problem of hunger in Ontario for your reflection and, more important, for your action. Hunger is a reality which strikes thousands in our cities and towns within Ontario. It strikes millions elsewhere in the world. If we cannot take steps towards lasting changes in one of the richest countries in the world, then it says to me that we accept hunger as the plight of the poor. I find this unacceptable. The lack of food seems to occur for some very complex reasons, and for some people it occurs in cycles. Those need to be addressed. They are being addressed here with the help of all people who participated in this and other hearings. Thank you for this opportunity.

**The Acting Chair (Mrs Fawcett):** Thank you very much, Pastor Froh, for that very moving and descriptive presentation of a situation that I do not think too many of us really are proud of.

**Mr McGuinty:** Pastor, first of all, thank you. I do not think we have had a more moving, compelling, convincing and sincere statement. I commend you very highly for it. Could you tell me something about the particular operation with which you are involved.

**Mr Froh:** The Native People's Parish, in conjunction with two other churches in the west end, operates a food bank called Roncesvalles Food Sharing. There is also another food bank operating out of Anduhyann, which is a native women's hostel on Spadina Road just north of Bloor, and there is also a food program that runs out of Council Fire. Many native people do not utilize these services, and I do not have current statistics with me to indicate how many of the people I know utilize these things. I have tried to gather that information, but for many people this type of information is not available.

**Mr McGuinty:** Surely.

**Mr Froh:** I also know native people in the Regent Park-Moss Park area that use these resources. St Paul's church has a food bank as well. Most people use the resources once a month, usually when they most desperately need them.

**Mr D. W. Smith:** I do not know how long you been here in Toronto as a pastor with the Native People's Parish, but have you any statistics as to the numbers of native people? Are more of them coming to Toronto, into the urban area, or are some of them now going back to the reservations because of legislation that was passed, I guess it was, within the last two or three years? How do you see the numbers going?

**Mr Froh:** That is a good question. In terms of Bill C-31—I think that is what you are referring to—presently I know that on some reserves the band membership lists have more than doubled or tripled. Whether or not all these people are returning to the reserves to live, I do not know. I do know that there are some people who are taking that option, but for the vast majority of people, their lives are here and they continue to live here.

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I do know that the vast majority of native people I know live in housing which is substandard, and even though they

have been here 10, 20 years and raised families here, they continue not to own the homes they live in. They continue not to own a car or a vehicle and to rely on public transportation or others or to go on foot. I do know that many people are still very much in jeopardy in terms of the job market. I believe all these factors are important.

In terms of statistics, from what I understand from some of the more current research from the 1986 census, the number is a guesstimate. Because the native community is such a small and invisible minority in the city and native people come from many different first nations all over the province, some from outside the province, even outside the country, it makes it very difficult to calculate numbers. But the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto, along with the Ontario Native Council on Justice, has compiled some figures in the last year that seem to suggest that there are over 40,000 native people living in Metropolitan Toronto.

I am finding there is a swing now in Metro for people who once found low-income and low-cost housing available in the inner city. This housing is no longer available and many people are now starting to move towards the suburbs. There are many people now living in Scarborough, North York, Etobicoke and outside the centre of the city, but that does not mean the problems are not still there. It just means that people are farther, sometimes, from the services that could meet their needs.

**Mr Allen:** Mr Froh, is the Native People's Parish the only church structure for native peoples in Metro Toronto?

**Mr Froh:** At this time, we are the only native Christian community that gathers in a regular and consistent way. There is a native gospel fellowship that meets, I believe, once a month at the Scott Mission, but its numbers are not that large. They are a good group of people. From my understanding, yes, we are.

**Mr Allen:** Is there an organized native religious organization that functions in the city in terms of native religious concerns, not simply Christian?

**Mr Froh:** As a Christian community, one of the reasons we exist is that people do not feel they belong in other churches. There are many native people who belong and are members of existing churches. Most of our members are Roman Catholic, some are Anglican and some United, and we have some traditional Baptist members. But there are a number of native people in the city who do live and follow what they call the Anishnabaw way. In terms of organization, it is in a different way, smaller numbers and more around events and what I would call seasonal thanksgivings. They fit into the larger native communities elsewhere, as we do.

**Mr Allen:** What is the food bank's relationship to, say, organizations like the Chiefs of Ontario or the Union of Ontario Indians?

**Mr Froh:** That is a hard one to answer. I know people at the Chiefs of Ontario and the union, and they have come out and helped us address certain issues like self-government. They helped us to reflect and share concerns around education last year. I think we have a healthy relationship but not a very close or working one.

My understanding is that the Chiefs of Ontario is a body that was formed at the request of the government of Ontario so that the government would not have to necessarily go to all the different native political organizations. There would be one organization the government could go and negotiate with, and that is my understanding of how that was formed. The different

tribal councils all feed into the different other native political organizations. I really cannot say much more in terms of our relationship with them, other than I think we have people who are very politically involved and aware.

**Mr Allen:** I know what you are referring to when you talk about some cynicism with regard to the results of the SARC process, because there was at least supposed to be in the first stage of reforms some movement in the direction of native delivery of social assistance programs, and there has been no movement at all in the interval.

In the light of that, could I ask you whether there are what we might call some distinctive measures that need to be taken in response to the hunger question via the broad SARC mandate, if I can put it that way, that we should be looking at as far as native people are concerned?

**Mr Froh:** That is a difficult question to answer.

**Mr Allen:** Yes, it is hard for me too.

**Mr Froh:** There are existing programs. Actually, a real poverty in the native community here in Toronto is how isolated people can be. When people say native, I do not know whether people think we all know one another, but we do not and we all come from different towns and places and reserves. I think because of that it makes it extremely difficult, and there really is a lot of work needed to be done in terms of just community organizing and responding to needs.

I believe there are a number of community organizations. There used to be an interagency council that never really operated well. One of the things that is happening now is that there is a new organization, or at least a quasi-organization, starting up in the city. It is called the Toronto Anishnawbe social agency, and what it is is a gathering together of a whole bunch of different native organizations to take a look at some of the pressing needs of the native people of Toronto and a way to consolidate, and ways really to vie for adequate programs and funding to ensure that the needs of different people are met.

I would say that under the SARC, what that could do is create possibilities, I think creative possibilities, within the native community and within maybe this Anishnawbe social agency, social assistance agency—I forget the exact name of it. I have been to a few meetings, but I forget these things. I think it would provide possibilities where there are a lot of small things going on, and oftentimes unconnected things.

I am sorry I am not more specific. I cannot say more on that other than what I have said.

**Mr Allen:** No, I guess I get a sense from you that on the one hand it certainly is important as a kind of first priority to go after the income maintenance, the income support level, but at the same time it is important to try to work towards a delivery agency for the native community that respects its autonomy, its identity and allows it to be part of that whole delivery mechanism to its own people.

**Mr Froh:** I believe that can take a part, not only with the native organizations but non-native organizations that do serve a native clientele. One of the things I mentioned is there are very few native people hired on by community organizations and there is little native volunteer support to deal with the native population that does come to different service agencies. This too is changing, but there could be much improvement.

Another thing that is interesting is that since SARC was implemented—my understanding of SARC really is that the only implementation I have seen is that there has been a \$20-

some increase per month per single welfare recipient. Basically, what I call the gap between those people who live below the poverty line and those people who live above it—because so many people live in housing situations where, if they get an increase, they turn around and their rent goes up, effectively they have no increase, and in fact sometimes a negative influence in terms of their available spending money after they have paid their rent.

I experience this with the people I work with. I experience this myself. Every time I get a raise, it seems to go out faster than it comes in. There seems to be almost a critical point that a person has to reach in order to get over that, and in Metro Toronto, I believe it is much higher here, to live and to exist here in a satisfying way or at least to enjoy a certain quality without having to worry constantly about just holding everything together. A lot of native people show a lot of courage in just holding their families together. They show a great spirit in order to hold their lives together when everything seems to be so difficult, just to get through the day, let alone the month.

What concerns me a lot is the children and what concerns me is our youth and our elderly. Too many of our youth are dying on the street. I hear people from the south, from Central and South America, talk about how people are dying down there. People are dying here too.

It just seems that the only people who take hunger as a real political issue are the hungry. I say this with some acceptance, knowing that I will not go hungry tonight, but there is nothing to move somebody to become involved in an issue if it does not involve them directly. And also, just a lot of people are still isolated where they are not moved necessarily to act politically, and I understand why. If you are trying to keep your life together and you are just scraping by, you do not have time, you do not have the energy, you do not have the willpower to turn out to community meetings or to speak before committees.

**Mr Faubert:** The one point you made about the community not being as homogeneous a community as it is probably thought of is an interesting point to make, because I think many people, when they talk about first nations, even if they understand the difference between the Metis and the treaty native, do not understand that this is not one community. Although I have seen parts of it—the Metis community built a co-operative in Scarborough, the Gabriel Dumont Nonprofit Homes, and I guess you are familiar with that, on Kingston Road, because people probably still focus back into the city of Toronto although they live in Scarborough.

**Mr Froh:** That is right.

**Mr Faubert:** But as a community, is this the attempt by the Anishnawbe groups to bring together all aspects of the community, to speak for it?

**Mr Froh:** You see, on the reserves many native people associate themselves, identify themselves as—if I was on Wikwemikong, on Manitoulin Island, I would say I am Potawatami or I am Ojibwa or Chippewa, or for down south I would say that I am Oneida, I am Dokis, or if I was from James Bay, if I was on the east side of James Bay I would say I am East Cree, or if I am from the west side of James Bay I would say I am West Cree. People identify themselves that way.

So when they move to the city, all people who move to the city—and I come from Saskatchewan originally and identify myself as Metis—there are all different types of people. In terms of a homogeneous group, I think in the cities there is a greater chance for a homogeneous group in one sense, because



people can identify or look to another native person and recognize that person is native, and not necessarily Ojibway or Chipewewa or Cree or Mohawk, but you recognize that person as native. There are many similarities and there is a lot of culture and customs that are held in common, but there are also a lot of differences. So one native person is not the same as another, but I think there are forces in the city that almost force native people to organize together.

There is a creative possibility here in Toronto. I really love the native community here in Toronto. There is a lot that is happening. There is a lot more that can happen. I believe, with assistance and help, and mostly I think from within the native community—native people are managing and starting to run and have run successfully organizations and service agencies for years now. The trick is to start to expand some of those services to try to meet the larger population that has come to the city.

It would be interesting to do some research. The movement of native people to cities is relatively new, since the Second World War, and there have been some studies done. I am aware of a government of Ontario study done in 1985, I believe. It started in the early 1980s. But there has not been a lot of re-

search done within the community. There has been some, but it is piecemeal and I believe that there is much yet to be done.

**Mr Faubert:** Do you touch at all with the Ministry of Citizenship, or are native people not considered part of the mandate of the Ministry of Citizenship?

**Mr Froh:** There is a native branch to the Ministry of Citizenship and I think it is involved in some language problems. I know there are some native people who work for them and who are presently working with them, but I have not benefited from relating with them here in the city.

**The Acting Chair:** I do not see any further questions, so I want to thank you very much, Pastor Froh, for coming. I am sorry you had that terrible experience getting here, but we appreciate your testimony because it will be valuable to us as we write our report.

This ends the second day of hearings of the standing committee on social development on the subject of food banks. The committee stands adjourned until 1:30 Thursday 8 March.

The committee adjourned at 1626.

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## STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

**Chair:** O'Neill, Yvonne (Ottawa-Rideau L)

**Vice-Chair:** Neumann, David E. (Brantford L)

Allen, Richard (Hamilton West NDP)

Cunningham, Dianne E. (London North PC)

Elliot, R. Walter (Halton North L)

Fawcett, Joan M. (Northumberland L)

Grandmaître, Bernard C. (Ottawa East L)

Jackson, Cameron (Burlington South PC)

Johnston, Richard F. (Scarborough West NDP)

Keyes, Kenneth A. (Kingston and The Islands L)

Stoner, Norah (Durham West L)

### Substitutions:

Faubert, Frank (Scarborough-Ellesmere L) for Mrs Stoner

McGuinty, Dalton J. (Ottawa South L) for Mr Grandmaître

Smith, David W. (Lambton L) for Mr Elliot

Villeneuve, Noble (Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry PC) for Mrs Cunningham

### Also taking part:

Curling, Alvin (Scarborough North L)

**Clerk:** Decker, Todd

**Clerk pro tem:** Freedman, Lisa

### Staff:

Drummond, Alison, Research Officer, Legislative Research Service





## **Legislative Assembly of Ontario**

Second Session, 34th Parliament

## **Official Report of Debates (Hansard)**

Thursday 8 March 1990

### **Standing Committee on Social Development**

Food Banks

## **Assemblée législative de l'Ontario**

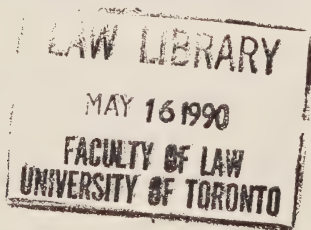
Deuxième session, 34<sup>e</sup> législature

## **Journal des débats (Hansard)**

Le jeudi 8 mars 1990

### **Comité permanent des affaires sociales**

Banques alimentaires



Chair: Yvonne O'Neill  
Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : Yvonne O'Neill  
Greffier : Todd Decker

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Thursday 8 March 1990

The committee met at 1354 in committee room 2.

### FOOD BANKS (continued)

**The Chair:** I will call the meeting of the standing committee on social development to order to continue our hearings.

### CATHOLIC CHARITIES SOUP KITCHEN

**The Chair:** We have one presenter this afternoon, Mrs Crichton from the Catholic Charities Soup Kitchen in Sudbury, if you would come forward to the chair, please. We have allotted 15 minutes for your presentation. I am sorry we are beginning late. We have been trying to prepare the preliminaries of our report and our day is quite condensed.

**Mrs Crichton:** I have a very condensed presentation.

**The Chair:** That will be helpful. Do you have a handout for us, Mrs Crichton?

**Mrs Crichton:** Yes, I do.

**The Chair:** If you would like to begin, I think other members of the committee will likely be joining us as we proceed.

**Mrs Crichton:** Thank you for your invitation. A little explanation before I read my presentation, our soup kitchen is a very small one. It was begun in 1982 by my husband and myself, just the two of us, and gradually over the years we have gathered a great deal of voluntary support, both in finances and food and in volunteers. We have never had to ask our community for any kind of help, really. We have had to say a lot of thank you's.

I will go on with the presentation, and I hope that you have some questions for me. The soup kitchen has been offering hospitality and free meals to people with low incomes since the fall of 1982. It is staffed by volunteers. It has one full-time employee, but my husband and I are still volunteers. It is supported financially and through donations of food through the generosity of the people of Sudbury: businesses, schools, churches, professional associations, employees' groups and many individual donors.

Among the average of about 200 guests who are served five days a week are elderly pensioners, many of whom are widowers, who enjoy the family atmosphere. There are young people who are looking for work, young mothers and sometimes grandmothers who bring preschool children for a good meal. There are many who have chronic illnesses or learning disabilities. They need some kind of social experience that does not include alcohol or drugs.

A variety of meals are served. Frequently there is thick and nourishing homemade soup and sandwiches, but once or twice a week there will be stew or spaghetti with meat sauce or a fish dinner or perhaps a casserole made with chicken and rice. Each guest may have as much as he needs to satisfy his hunger. Tea, coffee, milk and sometimes fruit juice are served with the meal, as well as a dessert.

Our volunteers range in age from teenagers to people in their 70s and come from every walk of life. We provide a valu-

able work experience for some who are developmentally handicapped and for others who are in training programs, such as Futures. For several years now students from Cambrian College of Applied Arts and Technology school of nursing have been assigned to work at the soup kitchen. The John Howard Society frequently requests placements for their clients who must serve community time. The soup kitchen provides an effective support system for a great many of the volunteers who work there.

I will add just a word to that. At the present time we have two university students who are students of social work. We are frequently asked if this can be included in programs in high schools. For instance, during one or two semesters a high school will send so many students a week. So that has been part of the direction that our soup kitchen has taken.

**Mr Allen:** I am delighted that Kaileen Crichton has come to give us some testimony with regard to the problem of hunger, as she and her family and assistants have responded to it over a number of years. I am probably the only member of the committee who has actually eaten there. Kaileen Crichton and the soup kitchen were, if you like, the starting-out point of the Sudbury branch of the March Against Poverty that marched from Sudbury to Toronto last March and April. We had a very fine meal and visit with the staff and with Kaileen herself.

Obviously you get to know your consumers, or clientele, whatever you want to call them, quite well. Could you tell us a little bit about them. You referred to the groups: young mothers, grandmothers, chronic illness and so on. Are most of the persons who come to the soup kitchen on social assistance or are they people who sometimes are working and yet have too low an income to make ends meet? What economically is their situation?

**Mrs Crichton:** There are people in both those categories. I think that most are on some kind of social assistance. It might just be the old age pension. I do not really know of too many, there might be two or three who have no income at all, but for the most part people cannot—there are people who are homeless to some degree in that they do not have any permanent place to stay. You know that you cannot exist in Sudbury in the wintertime without some kind of a roof over your head, but it may be pretty temporary for a lot of the people.

We talked to some of the police just a couple of days ago. They were in looking for somebody. By the way, the police in Sudbury have to be congratulated for the way they deal with disadvantaged people. In my estimation, their behaviour is very commendable—anything that I have noticed, anyway.

It is difficult. Our place is very small. We seat only 24 people at one time. We open the doors and begin serving a meal and they sit down and we wait on them. We like to do that for two reasons. We like to feel that—it is not that we like to feel; I really know. I do not know so much about poor people; I know poor people. I know them. They are my friends. They are the people who respond to my invitation to come for a meal every day. It is not a handout, because I really feel that handouts make people poorer. We are just doing something together.

It took several years for them to accept me. I was not very comfortable on Minto Street for the first few years. I was afraid

most of the time. It was a place where there was a lot of drug dealing, a lot of violence, a lot of bars. It is just the oldest and least pleasant part of Sudbury to be in, and I was really afraid to be alone in the building. I would never unlock a door if I were alone in there for the first few years, and we suffered a lot of vandalism.

People who are hungry and who have a low opinion of themselves are angry. If there is anything that we have done over the eight years, it is dispel the anger. At least I perceive that. I just have a different feeling about the people who come in now, and part of it is because there are only 24 people seated at one time. There is a relationship of some kind. We are not social workers; we are not counsellors. All we offer is hospitality, but it is genuine hospitality.

I have never asked anybody to work as a volunteer. People come and ask if they can please work as a volunteer, and I have never had a shortage of all ages of volunteers, and many handicapped volunteers. Nobody makes fun of anybody else no matter what state they are in. Many of the people serving are as handicapped as the people who come in. There is just a kind of acceptance on both sides.

After the first four years, we suffered no more vandalism, no more tricks and no more of that chipping away at our enthusiasm. So the relationship with the poor has grown. Now, that sounds as if it is the same people who are coming all the time. It is not. We might have a group of 60 or 70 that if you did not see them—after all, there are 200 people coming a day. You are very busy in there, so you do not really keep track of who comes every day, but you know the ones who come frequently.

Usually the people whose names we know and who develop more of an intimate relationship with us are people who have severe problems of alcoholism, mental illness, low IQ, inability to learn. Some people seem to think that the poor are lazy. They get blamed for everything at times. I really do not know of a lot of people out there who really are physically able or mentally able to hold down much of a job.

**Mr McGuinty:** Mrs Crichton, I think yours is unique among the institutions we have had described to us, although not unique among the ones I have seen over the years. Perhaps even among the majority of those who have come to us describing the soup kitchen situation, there is a kind of belligerence, a kind of hostility at the government's failure to get at the underlying root causes. One idealistic, but young upstart referred to the government's moral bankruptcy. Whether he had been inflamed in that direction by somebody else in the hall, I do not know.

A recurring theme was that food kitchens are temporary, that they are inadequate, that they should be done away with, that they should be replaced, that there is no place for them in our society, and that they are a sorry reflection of what goes on. You have portrayed something here. You say they are friends. You provide an absolutely invaluable work experience for some people.

**Mrs Crichton:** Absolutely.

**Mr McGuinty:** Next to my young 20-year-old daughter working in an obstetrical hospital in the middle of South Africa, I can think of nothing better for her than the work she has done in soup kitchens, and I have other relatives who do that. Do you think these should be done away with as soon as possible and replaced, or do you think they should be government-financed?

**Mrs Crichton:** No and no.

**Mr McGuinty:** No and no.

**Mrs Crichton:** I do not know about other soup kitchens, so I can only speak for myself and my own experience—

**Mr McGuinty:** Sure.

**Mrs Crichton:** —which has been positive and good. I wanted to do this very much. I just felt it was something that I was called to do and my husband graciously supports me in every way he can. Now I pretty well direct and run the soup kitchen, but he is right there all the time helping me in every which way and taking over a lot of responsibility so that I am free to do what I have to do. I have to do a lot of PR work in connection with it, and that increases.

But no and no. In fact government funding—I have had some assistance over the years from government through the emergency shelter assistance program. Only the first year, I believe, I used the entire amount that was allotted to me. Now I am not using up as much. It is ending in March of this year and I am not really the least bit concerned about that, because the whole community supports us so generously and we are such a low-budget operation.

I have brought some facts and figures, and I can leave those with the committee. I have a couple of extra copies. But just to give you an idea, last year we spent \$1,554 on groceries and we fed 44,224 people all they could eat, plus lots to take home. Every day we give away, give away, give away. There are 26 other agencies that are getting our surpluses, the food banks and the group homes. People are giving so much to us that we cannot use it all and we do not want it to go to waste. It is good food. The stores are supporting us, the businesses and the individuals with money, and personally, we have no worries.

**Mr McGuinty:** Yours is a very beautiful story. I am moved by it.

**Mrs Crichton:** But I would not like to be dependent on government. You know, it has been great. The government has helped me, and so has my church.

**Mr McGuinty:** You say you would not like to be dependent?

**Mrs Crichton:** No, I really would not.

**Mr McGuinty:** You like your independence. You like doing without it.

**Mrs Crichton:** I think it is a wonderful thing to have the community respond in this way, so that I can say to the government—

**Mr McGuinty:** Community involvement.

**Mrs Crichton:** —“Okay. Well, thanks for the help, but I really do not want to be an agency.”

**Mr McGuinty:** You know, you are a bit of an anachronism. You go back to my memories of childhood, when that type of thing was carried out within the church. If my mother were here, she would say very simply, “When the time comes for you to die, may you be in heaven a full two months before the devil even knows your dead.” A very beautiful story, Mrs Crichton; thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much for giving us another look at things, certainly, and thank you for coming the long distance for such a short time.

**Mrs Crichton:** It was a pleasure.



**The Chair:** If I may have the attention of the committee members, we are now at a point of decision. You have before you, or you all received, I hope, this morning in your offices the draft report that our researcher was able to pull together for us. Much of it is very helpful, a very good summary of a lot of the hearings. As a subcommittee, we have met for close to two hours this morning, mostly dealing with the recommendations, although we did deal a little bit with the body of the report. We have a decision to make in the next hour and 55 minutes. That can stretch to two hours, I think, without too much difficulty, but we have exactly two hours of the 12 left.

I would suggest that we return to the recommendations. Alison, our researcher, over a 20- to 30-minute lunchtime period has drawn together what she heard from the steering committee and she wants to speak to that. Then we will see how we work from there.

If anybody has a pressing suggestion for the body of the report, I would certainly invite that before we begin and as we proceed in the afternoon. If we run out of time, as did the one other standing committee that had this kind of 12-hour assignment, there is the alternative of letting the subcommittee finalize the report and provide some timetabling and that kind of direction, and also arranging for any press releases we want around the release of our report. It is certainly going to be a challenge to us, but I want you to know that at the end of the afternoon, the two hours, we can direct the steering committee to complete our work.

The exact way in which I have to deal with this is that I have to take a vote on all outstanding issues at the end of the two hours. So there will be no discussion. It would be a reading of what is left to decide and a decision made on each of those points. I just want everybody to know what we are going into, because it is different than most operations.

**Mr Allen:** Can I just understand that. Do you mean that at the end of this two hours precisely, there will be a vote on all outstanding issues?

**The Chair:** Right.

**Mr Allen:** Whether or not we have actually at that point in time got to the point where we have framed them in a voteable condition?

**The Chair:** We could then at that point direct—

**Mr Allen:** If we are going to do that, there is no point in going on to the rest of the procedure. What I understood would happen was that the subcommittee could meet and consider the outstanding issues and tidy up any of those matters, and then at another occasion you would be at liberty in the social development committee to take a straight vote but no discussion on the items that had been put to the subcommittee.

**The Chair:** Would that be possible?

**Clerk of the Committee:** If the 12 hours runs out, maybe before we direct the subcommittee, then the vote has to be taken. If you direct the subcommittee before the expiry of 12 hours, the subcommittee can then go off and finish and use the balance of the time it wants to come back, to such time—

**The Chair:** And then we would come back for a special meeting, whereat we would just vote on each issue as it stood?

**Clerk of the Committee:** Unless the direction is given to the subcommittee to give them the authority to finalize the report without coming back.

**Mr Keyes:** Why not say now that we direct the subcommittee to do that?

**The Chair:** I do not want to do that, because I do not want to presume the work of the next two hours. I think maybe that at one hour and 45 minutes we should think about that, because we may be able to accomplish quite a bit in two hours.

**Mr Allen:** Let's see where we are at in about an hour and a half.

**The Chair:** Yes. I am not counting the two hours right now.

Interjection.

**The Chair:** Our clerk says we have to count these as part of the two hours.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** Certainly. Yes, absolutely. Mr Jackson is saying that he cannot be here for votes near the end of the day because of Amy's birthday. I am wondering if, as long as we can have agreement that the first vote taken is on something to do with the subcommittee, at the tail end, as long as we make sure of that so that it is handled—

**The Chair:** Could you tell me what time you have to leave, Mr Jackson.

**Mr Jackson:** No later than 3:30, but I do not wish to influence the committee in that regard.

**The Chair:** Why do we not at 3:25 decide what we are going to do? Let's work for an hour.

**Mr Jackson:** Okay.

**Mr McGuinty:** Does a substitute have the right to vote?

**The Chair:** Certainly; every right.

**Mr McGuinty:** I assume nothing in this committee. You see, I suggested yesterday—my right to make a point was questioned; my right to make an observation was questioned. I find this recurring theme of Amy's birthday a bit tiresome, frankly.

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** Nobody is finding anybody more tiresome than you.

**The Chair:** Mr McGuinty, the time frame is very—anyway, I think we had better not—

**Mr McGuinty:** Apparently one of the NDP Dicks had a comment to make there. Did we put it down for the record?

**Mr R. F. Johnston:** You heard it, even with my voice—

**The Chair:** We are off the record now, please, for our work for the next two hours and we will reassess at one hour and 15 minutes.

The committee continued in camera at 1413.

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## STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

**Chair:** O'Neill, Yvonne (Ottawa-Rideau L)

**Vice-Chair:** Neumann, David E. (Brantford L)

Allen, Richard (Hamilton West NDP)

Cunningham, Dianne E. (London North PC)

Elliot, R. Walter (Halton North L)

Fawcett, Joan M. (Northumberland L)

Grandmaitre, Bernard C. (Ottawa East L)

Jackson, Cameron (Burlington South PC)

Johnston, Richard F. (Scarborough West NDP)

Keyes, Kenneth A. (Kingston and The Islands L)

Stoner, Norah (Durham West L)

### **Substitutions:**

Faubert, Frank (Scarborough-Ellesmere L) for Mrs Stoner

McGuinty, Dalton J. (Ottawa South L) for Mr Grandmaitre

Smith, David W. (Lambton L) for Mr Elliot

**Clerk:** Decker, Todd

**Clerk pro tem:** Freedman, Lisa

### **Staff:**

Drummond, Alison, Research Officer, Legislative Research Service





## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Second Session, 34th Parliament

## Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Monday 30 April 1990

## Standing Committee on Social Development

Deaf Persons' Rights Act, 1989

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

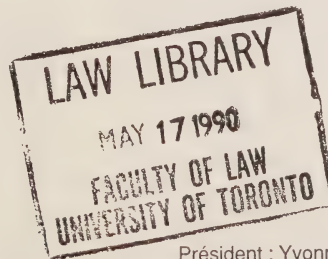
Deuxième session, 34<sup>e</sup> législature

## Journal des débats (Hansard)

Le lundi 30 avril 1990

## Comité permanent des affaires sociales

Loi de 1989 sur les droits  
des sourds



Chair: Yvonne O'Neill  
Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : Yvonne O'Neill  
Secrétaire : Todd Decker

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Monday 30 April 1990

The committee met at 1540 in room 151.

### DEAF PERSONS' RIGHTS ACT, 1989

Consideration of Bill 143, An Act to provide for Certain Rights for Deaf Persons.

**The Chair:** I bring to order this meeting of the standing committee on social development. Today we are going to be working on Bill 143, An Act to provide for Certain Rights for Deaf Persons.

We have Verna Beveridge who is going to be helping us this afternoon as our interpreter. It is an extraordinary day in committee because we have guests who are very special—I do not think I can say “people,” but they are certainly very important to this piece of legislation, and these are hearing-ear dogs. They have already been to the Legislature, I hear, at least one or two of them, so this is not a first for them, but it is a first for us on the committee.

I want to draw to your attention the pieces that we were sent from our researcher, Alison Drummond. She did do the research for us, as we asked, from the Ontario Hotel and Motel Association, the Motion Picture Theatres Association of Ontario and the Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association. I am happy that the reports came back, as you see them before you, with no concerns and with support. That was an input we had from the steering committee: Were we getting both sides of the picture here and was there co-operation and a feeling within the community that this was the way to go? I am very happy that the results came back as they did.

You also have before you other research material that Alison gathered for us, which I think is more than complete. We have before us one exhibit and one brief at this moment.

I would like to begin by asking Mrs Stoner to open with a statement. This is Mrs Stoner's bill. I know it is very close to her heart and we should begin with her presentation.

**Mrs Stoner:** This is a very special and different day for me, and also for Jill Johnson in my office, and also for Toby who works there as well. It was Jill and Toby who made me aware of hearing-ear dogs and what they could do for people. Some of the difficulties that Jill was experiencing with a guide dog made me realize that legislation was required.

I also found out that the United States is far ahead of us in this field. There are 48 states with legislation protecting these dogs and there are 3,000 hearing-ear dogs in the United States.

This bill is modelled on the Blind Persons' Rights Act, which is the bill that provides rights for seeing-eye dogs. It allows those dogs, and this will allow the hearing-ear dogs, to have access to all public spaces and places, which will prevent discrimination in housing and in restaurants and hotels and on public transportation.

The bill also provides for a visual signal to help identify hearing-ear dogs. The seeing-eye dogs are quite visibly noticeable because of their harnesses. That is not necessary for the deaf, but they do have to be identified. The bill will provide for an orange collar and leash as well as an identification card that the deaf person would have, showing that the dog was his or her hearing-ear dog. The Attorney General's office provides ac-

creditation for the training schools for the seeing-eye dogs and would provide the same thing for the hearing-ear dogs.

Hearing Ear Dogs of Canada, which Jackie Harbour runs, is a non-profit organization. They train the dogs there. They are provided to the deaf community at no cost, no charge at all, but it actually costs \$4,000 to train a dog, a very significant investment.

I have had a number of letters of support from individuals which, if Todd would like, I can give to you, as well as letters of support from groups and companies, including the Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association, GO Transit, Fun-Trek Coach Lines, the Inn on the Park Hotel and Air Canada, all in support. As well, as the Chair mentioned, the motion picture association of Ontario and the hotel and motel association have no difficulty with the proposed legislation.

I have also received a brief from Voice for Hearing Impaired Children, which is the parents' group. I do not know whether it was just sent to me. It is for the committee, so I would pass that on as well. I have a series of—

**The Chair:** I think you are the only one, as far as I know, who has that at the moment.

**Mrs Stoner:** Okay. Then this is to be shared.

**The Chair:** Yes, it would be tabled as well.

**Mrs Stoner:** Also, I have a series of articles on hearing-ear dogs as they are throughout Canada. If we pass this legislation, we will be the first province in Canada to have hearing-ear dog legislation.

**The Chair:** I think we have somebody from the press. I was just saying I had sent a special invitation to the media in the Legislature, in the press gallery, so I am glad that one person at least has shown up, because I do think this is a special story.

**Mrs Stoner:** To get back to the special story about Toby and Jill, you will hear more about the training of the dogs, but I know from my experience with Jill that having Toby has made all the difference in the world to her life and to her family. She has two children, aged 9 and 10, who were to some degree responsible for looking after their mother. They had to let her know if there was any sort of alarm, if the car did not sound right, if there was somebody at the door, if there was a phone call for her, if the timer went off, if she needed to be awakened at a certain time. All of those services they no longer have to provide. Toby does it all, as well as letting Jill know if somebody is calling her. If I called Jill right now, Toby would respond by touching her, by perking his ears and by nudging her in some way to let her know that something was happening and would take her to the person who wanted to speak to her or whatever was required.

He is a very bright animal. He is a joy to be around and great fun to have in the office, very much a working dog, not a pet or a toy, but quite impressive. He has made a great deal of difference for Jill and for all of us who know her.

**The Chair:** Although I cannot call the dogs people, I have a good word for them now—workers. We will use that term because I am sure that is really what this bill is all about.

#### LIONS FOUNDATION OF CANADA

**The Chair:** The first witness we have on our agenda is Ron Brown from the Lions Foundation of Canada. If Mr Brown would come forward, that would be helpful.

**Mr Brown:** Thank you for giving me the opportunity of addressing this gathering this afternoon. I am with the Lions Foundation of Canada. We are a charitable foundation that is comprised of volunteer members of Lions Clubs right across Canada.

Currently, we operate Canine Vision Canada in Oakville, which is a seeing-eye dog school. We also operate Hearing Ear Dogs of Canada. As has been pointed out by the member, the rights of a blind person are very definite and are becoming less and less of a problem all the time. The public awareness of a seeing-eye dog is very high, and that is because seeing-eye dogs are on the street and public awareness is very prevalent.

The situation we are talking about this afternoon with hearing-ear dogs, as was pointed out earlier, is an indoor type of thing. We run into the same problem when we are out doing our fund-raising and our promotion, the fact that hearing-ear dogs are inside and people just are not aware, but we feel very strongly that this is not a reason to discriminate against a deaf or hard-of-hearing person.

1550

Public awareness is on the rise very rapidly, and the bill being presented is almost word for word the same as the seeing-eye dog privileges. When I say that public awareness is on the rise very rapidly, from our point of view, the quantity of hearing-ear dogs graduating is on the rise very much faster than seeing-eye dogs. Seeing-eye dogs have tended to level out and at Canine Vision Canada we are getting more and more into the replacement of dogs that have retired, whether it be for age or health reasons, whatever. The replacement aspect of the thing is getting higher now; the new student aspect is levelling off. But when you are talking about hearing-ear dogs, new students are increasing very rapidly and among the deaf community itself is where the awareness is starting to really take hold very quickly.

If there is any question in anybody's mind as to the viability or the value of a hearing-ear dog, the Lions Foundation of Canada goes at this in maybe a little bit of a different approach. Yes, there are mechanical means of assistance, both with seeing-eye dogs and with hearing-ear dogs, but it is generally felt very strongly that in most cases where a recipient qualifies, the dog is a safer and more reliable means of assistance for the handicapped. In saying that, what I am driving at really is yes, we have white canes and we have sound devices to assist the blind. There are downfalls and there are pitfalls to both those situations.

I think we should all realize that a dog is not going to lead a person into a dangerous situation because, maybe not too unlike a pilot who is not going to crash the plane because he is going to be in the plane too, the dog is really no different: the dog is not looking to get harmed itself. It is the same situation with the deaf and the hearing-impaired group. Yes, there are mechanical means, but there are also power failures, there are battery failures, there are all these other things that go with it and, in a lot of cases, a dog becomes somewhat of a companion for a deaf person.

I think we all should realize the privilege we have of having our faculties. A deaf person would tend to get very lonely, not really totally understanding what is going on around him or her, and a dog provides some companionship as well. That is not by any means the main reason for a hearing-ear dog, but once again I think the safety factor involved is far higher with a dog than with mechanical means.

Really, that is the end of my comments. Thank you very much for giving me the privilege of being here this afternoon. Are there questions and answers?

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. You did certainly give us a very quick and precise overview.

**Mr Allen:** I think, for the information of the committee, it would be helpful if you could tell us a bit more about the training of the dogs, the kinds of sounds they are trained to respond to and how they are trained to communicate with a person with hearing difficulty, the nature of the sound and where it is coming from and those kinds of matters that would obviously be critical to the deaf person.

**Mr Brown:** With your permission, I would like to leave that for the next presenter. Jacqueline Harbour is our administrator of training. My basic function really is administration, not training. I do know it and I can answer it, but I think you would be better to have a more qualified answer.

**Mr Allen:** That is fine with me.

**Mr Keyes:** We know the Lions Club has done a great deal of work all across Canada and internationally on behalf of many different groups. I do not think you referred to it completely, but could you give me just the extent of involvement that the Lions Club has had in this program, the number of dogs you have actually been responsible for having trained in the appropriate facilities in the country and how many are currently out with their clients?

Also, what kind of turnover do we have? Do we have to replace the workers more frequently or does the one dog usually get through two or three people in a period of time? It is not likely, but I am thinking of if they are seniors. I am thinking maybe I should get one for my mother, who is 92 and moving into an apartment on her own on Saturday. She has two hearing aids at the moment. Maybe I need to get Toby for my mother.

**Mr Brown:** The Lions Foundation became involved with Hearing Ear Dogs of Canada basically in December 1987 and officially in June 1988. Since that time, there have been about 35 dogs graduated. I should also mention that we are talking about right across the country now, not just Ontario, but I would say that Ontario will be the first to have legislation should this bill go through. I am trusting that it is going to go through.

As far as the foundation is concerned, we are too young to have the experience of replacing dogs yet. My assumption at this time would be that it is not too unlike the seeing-eye dog having a working life of, on average, eight to 10 years, which says that the dog is about 12 years old. I think I will let Mrs Harbour answer the question as far as retraining and replacing a dog are concerned. I think that is more in her realm.

#### HEARING EAR DOGS OF CANADA

**The Chair:** Mrs Harbour, it seems that you have all the answers to all the questions we have been asking, so maybe we have already begun to frame your remarks for you, but please begin.



**Mrs Harbour:** My mother started to lose her hearing when she was about 30. Nobody ever knew; she hid it very well. She bluffed her way through life. She learned to lip-read and picked up body language. She talked an awful lot so people could not ask her questions which she could not hear to answer.

**The Chair:** It seems there are a few people around here who—

Interjections.

**The Chair:** You have hit a note.

**Mrs Harbour:** She was always getting up and checking the door to see if anyone was there. With her hearing aids, if she heard a noise, she very often did not understand what it was or know where it was coming from. If she was expecting a phone call, when she should still hear on the phone, she was always going over listening or staying in the same room with the phone.

She was very nervous of being left totally alone. If we went out, she always wanted the dog left with her so if anyone did come to the door or anything strange happened, the dog would at least give her some kind of warning.

1600

When I grew up and married, my hobby became dogs. I went to the dogs years ago. I was in breeding, training and boarding dogs, and I had quite a bit of experience.

When my mother emigrated over to Canada, I told everyone she was deaf. She was horrified, but it gave her a greater understanding that if we understood her problem, she could handle life better. Then I decided to train a dog for her and I trained the dog to alert her whenever it heard a certain noise, such as the door. If someone came to the door, it would come up to her and make physical contact and take her to the door. If the phone rang, again it would make physical contact and take her to the phone. She uses a cooking timer an awful lot to remind her that her washing is finished, that she has run the bath or that the kettle is on, not only for cooking. The dog would also remind her of that and take her to the timer.

Very important, something she was very worried about, was the smoke detector or fire alarm. One of the last worst fires we had in an old people's building, the only people who perished were the people who were hearing-impaired, because they did not hear the fire alarm.

So I trained Saucy, which was the dog's name. Somebody got hold of the story and reported it to our local paper, the Hamilton Spectator. It had a very big writeup there. Other deaf people read about it and started asking me could I train more dogs, and this is how we came into being. Since then, we have trained and placed over 65 right across Canada.

The security and companionship the dogs give the people is fantastic. We train them to a basic five or six noises, starting with the alarm clock in the morning if it is needed, somebody at the door, the phone ringing, babies crying or children calling for their parents, as well as other people calling them—particularly if they have gone deaf, you tend to forget and you still call out for that person, and the dog can alert them and take them to those particular people—timers, particularly now on microwaves, and very important to many, many people, smoke detectors and fire alarms.

They are the basic ones we train them to, but the dogs pick up an awful lot on their own and seem to know the people cannot hear. We have had dogs alert their owners to such things as a night light shorting out in a child's bedroom and an extrac-

tor fan that had gone off kilter. My mother's own dog kept taking her to the fireplace. She thought, "You silly dog, you just remember the marshmallows we had the other night," but no, it had been storming and a bird had been blown down and was pecking on the fire screen. Somebody else said that she was returning from the barn, where she has a horse. The dog kept running between her and the tire of her truck. So she went over and realized it was going flat. The dog also heard the hissing of the air coming out and stopped her from having a flat on the highway in the dark of night.

We have one little dog that works with a lady who is deaf and is a paraplegic. She lives alone and without her dog she would be in an institution. The dog of course does all the usual things: gets her up in the morning, alerts her to the telephone and people at the door and helps her at work also. Now she has taken on an even greater responsibility. The lady is on tube feeding and gets a certain amount of nutrients during the night, and when she has had enough nutrient, a bell goes off. The dog wakes her up and she switches over to the next nutrient. This goes on right through the night.

The dog also saved her life. The battery on her wheelchair shorted out and the fumes would have overcome her within 30 seconds if the dog had not alerted her, allowing her enough time to fall down and out of the wheelchair, and the dog grabbed her collar and helped pull her out the door.

So the dogs do a tremendous amount for the people. When it is a situation of older people who have lost their hearing, they often become recluses because of the problem of communication. The dogs keep them active in their communities. They have to take the dog out for a walk. They are often forced to meet and talk to people, because everyone comes up to want to pat the dog. They are put in a position of saying, "No, no, please don't pat it," and then they have to explain why. Many people have told us that the dogs have kept them very active in their community, meeting all kinds of neighbours that they did not know before, but giving them the confidence and security to be able to live alone happily in their community in their own homes.

We do not normally give dogs to young children. Usually they are over—we say 15, but we try to encourage it to be 18 to 21. Teenagers have other things on their minds than a dog, so we do not feel it is the best situation, but every situation is judged individually on its own merits. We have quite an in-depth application form. We make a personal interview. Then we choose the dog and train the dog according to what that particular person needs.

Many of the dogs we rescue from the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the Humane Society. They are not normally big dogs. Many of these dogs have to live in townhouses and apartments; therefore, we need small dogs. They do not have to physically lead the person; therefore, we do not need the size of dog.

We train the dogs at our centre in Ancaster. It takes four to six months to train the dogs. Then the trainer takes the dog to its new home and environment, getting the dog used to its new home, showing it where all the noises are, then making the transfer from the trainer to the recipient. We keep in close contact for the first three months, making sure there are no problems, paving the way if they want to take them out in public, because many of these people cannot talk. Therefore, we are there to explain the situation to the people where they want to go.

After three months, we go back and test the dogs and the owner. If all goes well, we certify them. This is when they are

presented with their bright orange leash and collar, which is internationally recognized as a hearing-ear dog recognition. We keep in close contact all the time. If there are any problems, we will go out and help them with them, and we make an annual checkup visit.

The deaf people, of course, when they travel, very often use public transportation and they want the dogs to go with them. Therefore, they do need to take the dogs on buses, taxis, planes, trains, etc. They have to stay somewhere; therefore, they need the dogs in their hotels and motels. Many people do take their dogs to work. Some people do like to take them everywhere they go. They feel they are security for them.

We have had dogs alert their owners to an alarm going off in a mall, for instance. We have had one dog whose lady is a foster mother here in Toronto. She had taken the kids to McDonald's for a meal and two of the boys, twin boys, actually, had gone off. All of a sudden, the dog alerted her and took her to the boys' washroom, where she found them in the middle of a heck of scrap. So they do accompany the owners wherever they go.

Sheila, the lady who is the paraplegic, has just had her legs removed and the doctor felt it would good for Sheila's morale for the dog to be in the hospital with her, which it was. The dogs do need to go wherever the deaf persons go, so I really do hope that this bill passes. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. You said that it really did not matter what type of dog or breed of dog. Is that the understanding?

**Mrs Harbour:** That is correct, yes.

**The Chair:** It can be any breed or no breed or mixed breeds.

**Mrs Harbour:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Any questions?

**Mr Keyes:** I do have a question about the retraining. Do you have to retrain the dog if it does change owners, because you have alerted it to responding to certain sounds in a specific household, and then a different person would have to have the dog retrained?

**Mrs Harbour:** On the whole, the dog stays with the person for its entire life. If something happens, if the dog is young enough and we get it back, yes, we can retrain the dog for another person.

**Mr Keyes:** I believe the article said that the dogs always remain the property of the foundation.

**Mrs Harbour:** Yes.

**Mr Keyes:** They never become personal property of the people.

**Mrs Harbour:** That is correct, yes.

**Mr Jackson:** Do you have any cases where there is a mismatch and you rematch a client with a certain dog, or is there a part of the client-based selection process in consultation first, or is it just the dogs you are currently training that are available and you discuss those needs with the client? Are there various approaches there?

**Mrs Harbour:** Yes. We have the application form. We have to have a doctor's certificate or an audiologist's certificate. We ask for character references. Then I go out and make a personal interview with the people so that I have a good idea of what they want and what they need. Then we go out and try to

find the dog to suit. We do not have dogs in the kennel waiting or partway through their training. We usually go out and try to find the dog to suit the particular person and situation.

1610

**Mr Jackson:** How long a waiting list do you have now?

**Mrs Harbour:** We have about 15 people on a waiting list now and there is—

**Mr Jackson:** I am sorry to interrupt. Nationally or provincially?

**Mrs Harbour:** Nationally.

**Mr Jackson:** How many of those would be Ontario-based?

**Mrs Harbour:** I think just over half.

**Mr Jackson:** Is there financial support for the development of the training for these dogs?

**Mrs Harbour:** Yes, the Lions Foundation gives us financial support.

**Mr Jackson:** Entirely. So there is no assistance beyond the foundation work.

**Mrs Harbour:** Yes, many other service clubs do support the dogs that are going into their community. We have a lot of financial support from public awareness and that sort of thing.

**Mr Jackson:** Is that consistent across the provinces?

**Mrs Harbour:** Yes, it is.

**Mr Allen:** You indicated that the dogs do not become the personal property of the persons with whom they are lodged?

**Mrs Harbour:** Yes.

**Mr Allen:** Is that also the case with seeing-eye dogs?

**Mrs Harbour:** Yes, it is.

**Mr Allen:** I see. I was under the impression that a person securing a seeing-eye dog paid a significant price, but I did not realize that did not mean purchase of the dog.

**Mrs Harbour:** In the case of Canine Vision, the dogs are donated to the person, but the ownership remains Canine Vision's. If anything happens to the person or if the dogs are being mistreated in any way, we go in and take them back.

**Mr Allen:** Have you ever had to do that?

**Mrs Harbour:** No, we have not.

**Mr Allen:** Not yet.

**Mr Neumann:** You gave me and I think other members of the committee a pretty good idea of what the dogs are trained to do in the home and you indicated to some extent what happens outside the home, but perhaps what I would like to hear is a little more detail on what uses the hearing-ear dog would be in a restaurant or hotel or other public places.

**Mrs Harbour:** If the people are travelling, the dogs go with them. Therefore, if they have to eat, the dogs usually have to accompany them into the restaurant, because they cannot just leave the dog in a hot car or a cold car.

Many people just feel much, much more secure, but things have happened like a smoke detector going off or an alarm going off. Everyone gets up and rushes out. The deaf person does not know why. No one tells them, no one explains the situation, whereas the dog alerts them. They know there is something to be worried about and they will leave.



In a motel, of course, you have got fire alarms, you have got people knocking on your door, telephones ring. Where I have just placed a dog, there was a flashing light on the phone. She did not know what it was for. She could not hear the phone ring, so she went down to the front desk and asked, "Why is the light flashing on my phone?" Of course, they were trying to get through with a message. So the dogs can alert them that the phone is ringing in those situations.

**Mrs Stoner:** I would just add a comment to David's question. I know that one of the things that Toby did for Jill, which was above and beyond his training, was to alert her when her car was making a funny noise. There was a serious problem with it that only Toby was aware of.

**The Chair:** He does not have his mechanic's papers, does he?

**Mrs Stoner:** He ensured that she got to work and also was able to get home.

**The Chair:** You said that once the request comes in and you have done all of your interviews and have determined that this person is going to be one of your candidates, you would then go out searching for a dog. Could you tell us a little bit about what you are looking for when you go on the search?

**Mrs Harbour:** Certainly. We are looking for a dog that is very outgoing, very willing to please people, with absolutely no aggression and with a lot of curiosity. We want the dog to have enough energy throughout his life always to get up and investigate that noise.

Then we look for the specific dog we are looking for. If it is an older person, we are usually looking for a smaller dog that is a little more gentle, because, as you know, older people bruise more easily, so we do not want a dog that is going to hit them hard. If you have ever seen Corky work, you will know what I mean.

If it is a younger family, they usually want a younger dog, a little bigger, a bit more active, that can accompany them on a lot of the family outings, camping, cross-country skiing, etc. If you are putting a dog into an apartment, we are looking for a dog that will not bark, and there are certain breeds and cross-breeds that have less tendency to bark than other breeds. So these are all the sorts of things we are looking for when we go out to find the dog to suit the situation.

I have got a couple of new ones now where the people do have a certain amount of visual impairment and the type of dog we are now looking for is a light-coloured dog because it shows up better for them to see and follow. So every case is individual.

**Mr Keyes:** I do not know what the situation is with the seeing-eye dogs to accompany people on municipal transport or public transit, CN Rail, Via, airplane. How is that accommodated? Do they pay a fare, a portion fare, for free or just what? If you are going from here to Vancouver, for example, do they go in the luggage as normal dogs travel or how?

**Mrs Harbour:** In the majority of cases, the dogs travel free, sitting right beside the person on the plane or train or bus, with no problems whatsoever.

**Mr Keyes:** And that has been accepted by all methods of transit then, doing that. Is that the case for seeing-eye dogs too then?

**Mrs Harbour:** Yes, it is.

**Mr Keyes:** I just noticed in our bill, the one section here, and that is the reason I asked it, said,

"Nothing in this section shall be construed to entitle a deaf person to require any service, facility or accommodation in respect of a dog guide other than the right to be accompanied by the dog guide."

Has the accommodation that has been made by the transportation system been a free-will offering?

**Mrs Harbour:** Yes, it has. The dogs are trained to go under the seat and lie down and stay there until the end of the journey.

**Mr Jackson:** But they are not entitled to bark.

**Mrs Stoner:** But they are entitled to accompany.

**Mr Keyes:** People would not be entitled, as I read our bill, though, to demand that. It has always been provided, but if suddenly one of those means of transportation said, "Sorry, you've got to pay half fare," the same as you do for a child or something, then this bill does not override the public policy.

**Mrs Harbour:** I believe Via Rail charges for the dogs.

**Mrs Stoner:** Trust them.

**Mr Neumann:** And they still have a deficit.

**Mr Keyes:** This is an important issue, because it—

**Mrs Harbour:** They allow them to sit with them on the train.

**Mr Jackson:** This is an issue of access—just access. I believe there is no right for the owner to demand that the dog be fed. It would be incumbent on the owner to provide the meal while accompanying and so on.

If I might interject, the only area which would be of concern is some of the safety regulations in terms of emergencies. Is there a certain section of the plane which they use? Surely they must get the bulkhead seats.

**Mrs Harbour:** We try to.

**Mr Jackson:** And near the exit that is adjacent, with special instructions to be let off early, as opposed to—

**Mrs Harbour:** Yes. They are usually first on and usually last off when we come to an airport.

**Mr Jackson:** Sorry for the interruption.

**The Chair:** Air Canada certainly follows that rule, because I have travelled with dogs quite a bit.

**Mr Jackson:** There was a Conservative MP who travelled to Ottawa with his seeing-eye dog for many years.

**Mrs Fawcett:** Really, this is most fascinating. To your knowledge, have there been any problems with the members of the public not accepting the dogs?

**Mrs Harbour:** In some stores. Mainly in some stores.

**Mrs Fawcett:** Is it just lack of knowledge and fear?

**Mrs Harbour:** On the whole, yes. We ask the deaf people to get the person's name and address, or the manager-owner's, and we write explaining the whole situation and it is all cleared up. They apologize and say, "Okay, we're sorry." We have had very few problems as far as acceptance goes.

**Mr Neumann:** That was going to be my question. I will follow it up and say, if there are so few problems and if people are learning about it and accepting it, why do we need the legislation?

**Mrs Harbour:** The deaf people would feel much more confident if they had the legislators behind them. Many of them

are scared to go out in public because of being challenged. They do not know how to explain the situation.

**Mr Neumann:** So the bill has not been prompted by a great many problems or lack of acceptance; it is more for the comfort of the deaf persons themselves.

**Mrs Harbour:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Would the stores be mostly food stores?

**Mrs Harbour:** No. Funnily enough, they are not. Some of the other types of stores are putting up more of a problem than the food stores.

**The Chair:** It would be nice to be pioneers with this kind of legislation, so thank you very much for your presentation. It was most informative. I think you did answer all the questions Mr Brown said you would.

1620

#### BOB RUMBALL ASSOCIATION FOR THE DEAF

**The Chair:** I ask Wendy Beveridge now to come forward. She is a representative for the Bob Rumball Association for the Deaf.

**Mrs Beveridge:** I am going to move the deaf people around so they can see me so I can sign while I talk.

**The Chair:** Perfect. Thank you for being with us today and being so helpful, Wendy.

**Mrs Beveridge:** No problem.

Jill is really the only deaf person I know who has a hearing-ear dog who takes her dog out into the community, but I do know several deaf people who have them in their own homes. The foster parents were mentioned before. I know that foster family, and the dog has been very, very helpful to them. I have seen this need for companionship and the dog has met that need.

I think that is true of all elderly people, but quite often people whose hearing is failing are very, very isolated in the community. They do not really belong to the group we service because they are not culturally deaf growing up, but they really have a need for that kind of companionship and for continued contact with the community.

We feel this legislation is important. It is very hard to explain. The deaf people want the same kinds of rights as blind people have. There are not a lot of things that are comparable, but this is one of the things. You already have legislation for the blind and there has been a lot of advocacy for the blind. There has not been as much advocacy for the deaf and there are not a lot of areas that are comparable.

It is true that we are very far behind the United States in services to the deaf community and I think it is very, very important that we provide the necessary services and the legislation, so that if they are challenged they have something to support them and they are not out there standing alone; they have the support of the community at large. Beyond that, I do not have a lot more to say, but we felt that was important.

**Mrs Stoner:** I think there is one point that Mrs Beveridge makes and others have referred to that is something that is beyond the scope of this bill, but it deals with the fact that the deaf are probably the most socially isolated group in our society. Whether they are elderly who have lost their hearing or whether they are young people trying to cope in a hearing world and growing up in that world, it is often very difficult to com-

municate and to make friends and have an active social life. Some can manage and do it wonderfully, but others cannot. Beyond the help that the dogs give in alerting and in working, the social thing cannot be underestimated. The companionship the dogs provide is very important to these people.

**Mr Jackson:** Are there any frustrations that are expressed about the limitations of the dogs and their capabilities? Is there something that is referenced, that they wish it could maybe go one step farther and are we doing anything in that area?

**Mrs Beveridge:** Not to my knowledge. The people who are using them in their homes are using them for the same things that people like Dorothy Beam use their technical devices for. There are people who do not want flashing lights going off all over their house, for some reason, but I do not know about anything else that they are asking them to do.

I know the dogs do pick up and do other things. My boss's daughter-in-law is hearing-impaired and they have trained their dog to follow around and pick up things that she drops that she cannot hear. If she loses her key, her dog goes and gets it. It is not a trained, certified hearing-ear dog. They have done the training in the home for the dog to do that. The dog alerts her to sounds as well.

**Mrs Stoner:** This is not a question, but again another comment. I would like to introduce a very special lady who is here and who is communicating with Mrs Beveridge. That is Dorothy Beam. Dorothy is one of the most recent recipients of the Order of Ontario for her extraordinary work in educating the deaf in the community. I am very pleased that she is here in support of the bill as well.

**Mrs Beveridge:** She would like to say a few words and she would like me to interpret for her.

**Mrs Beam:** Before I came here today, I really felt that I should be very supportive of Jill and her need for the dog, but it did not seem very important to me, because in my experience I have always depended on technical things and I have never taken dogs to meetings, social events or conventions when I travel to Edmonton, Halifax or wherever.

I was concerned about the expense of feeding a dog, so I have always depended heavily on technical devices. But now I am thinking that I live alone in my house and there are failures in technical devices. I still do not have full flashing lights in my house. The government has given me money to put them in, but I am starting to think maybe that was the wrong choice.

I do not like going out for a walk at night because I am afraid, but if I had a dog like Toby, then there would be many useful ways for me to get out into the community and it would be more supportive for me. I think the legislation is important. The dog can go anywhere.

**The Chair:** I would also draw your attention to Mrs Beam's exhibit, which she was kind enough to present to us although not an official presenter. Thank you very much, Mrs Beveridge. I am sure you are not going to leave us. You are going to stay with us.

**Mrs Beveridge:** I am here for the rest of the afternoon.

**The Chair:** I understand Jill Johnson is here and would be ready to present at this time. Jill Johnson will be representing the Howlers and will tell us a bit about the association. I am sure.

**Mrs Stoner:** I think the next presenters are here now. They were not here earlier.



**The Chair:** What do we want to do? Do we want to reverse them?

**Mrs Stoner:** Rosemary Pryde and Bob Porter from Voice for Hearing Impaired Children.

**The Chair:** If you want to go back to the original order, we will do that. I did not know how firmly we had invited Ms Johnson to do that. I am sorry. We will go back then. We are running a little ahead of time, as you can see.

#### VOICE FOR HEARING IMPAIRED CHILDREN

**The Chair:** If you would like to come forward, the representatives of Voice for Hearing Impaired Children, Rosemary and Bob, that would be helpful. We have heard from the first three presenters, just since you were not with us, but the time frame has been condensed some. Their presentations were a little shorter than we had expected.

**Ms Pryde:** Ours will be short too.

**The Chair:** That is fine. We all have a lot that we can go on to if we do condense today's hearings. Ms Drummond will give out the packages and exhibits as you are beginning. Sit there, please. As soon as you speak, the microphones will be on. Who will be the spokesperson, or will you both be presenting?

**Ms Pryde:** Both of us. I am going to be reading from our presentation that we worked up, and Bob, as a parent of a hearing-impaired son and also director of the board of directors of Voice, is going to be giving you a personal perspective.

**The Chair:** I think Voice is a very well-known association to the Legislature and to this committee. We have already had one presentation in some of our hearings, so you do not have to introduce yourselves totally, but certainly a preliminary opening statement would be more than useful.

**Ms Pryde:** I am Rosemary Pryde and I am the executive director of Voice. I have been in that position for the past two years. I think it is appropriate to mention in this particular hearing that I am also hearing-impaired. I have severe loss and have been deaf since age four. I speak, as you can tell, rather than sign. That was the approach that my parents chose for me and that is incidentally the approach that many Voice parents choose for their children. I think that was one reason I was selected to become the executive director.

1630

I have not had any personal experience yet with hearing-ear dogs. I have spoken to the people from the training school. This would be two or three years ago when I attended a conference and the hearing-ear dogs were there at the conference. I was quite amazed at what they could do. It is something that is always in the back of my mind as I grow older and my hearing deteriorates even more, as everything else seems to deteriorate when we grow older. Eventually something like this might be very appropriate for me. It may also be appropriate for some of the children we are working with. That was the reason we wanted to come and support Norah Stoner's bill.

Probably most of you are familiar with us. Just in case there is anybody here who is not, we are a parent-support organization. We started in 1963. The group was actually started by about a dozen parents in Toronto who wanted their hearing-impaired children to go to regular schools and realized that the only way they were going to accomplish this was if they worked together and provided some solutions to the school boards, which at the time were a bit reluctant to integrate the

children into regular schools, because they were not sure that they would be able to provide the service for them.

These parents got together for that particular goal, and while they were working together on this goal they also began to realize the tremendous benefits of having other parents to talk to, to share ideas and concerns and to support one another. That is how Voice was born, and here we are 27 years later. We now are a province-wide organization. We have seven official chapters across Ontario. I handed out a brochure for those of you who are not familiar with us. The chapters are listed on the back of the brochure.

We have about 600 families in our organization in Ontario, but we also have another 300 or 400 families outside the province, and indeed outside the country. We are the largest parent-support organization for hearing impairment in North America. Actually, in most places we are the only parent-support organization, and that is a real shame. There should be more and we are certainly working on trying to expand our own group.

We exist as an organization to provide hope for the families and to show the public that hearing-impaired kids can indeed learn to utilize the residual hearing they have. This may not be the choice for all hearing-impaired children or their parents, but it is one choice that is definitely available.

As parents, our members, our families are very concerned with the future wellbeing of their children.

You will forgive me; I am going to take my glasses off so that I can read this. I cannot see the writing with my glasses on.

**The Chair:** I have the same problem, so I understand completely what you are doing.

**Ms Pryde:** Good. I have a prescription in my purse for bifocals, and I have had it for the last three years. I am not about to try out those bifocals.

**The Chair:** You are not a procrastinator, are you?

**Ms Pryde:** Many of our children are profoundly deaf and we always are thinking of the future, what it is going to be like. I have had several conversations with my parents, particularly my mother, over the past few years since I became involved with this organization. She too wondered, when I was four, five and six, what was going to happen. It is important to us to make sure that we provide for the future of our children.

There are many tools and aids already available right now to help hearing-impaired persons function in a hearing world. The tools include things like signing, so that a hearing person and a deaf person will be able to communicate. They also include hearing aids, FM systems, and more recently this new service called hearing-ear dogs. We have not made use of this particular service, but we regard it as another potential aid that could help enhance the independence of hearing-impaired persons who are unable to rely on sound signals.

Actually, Bob, I hope, will talk a little bit about some of the ideas that he has for situations. If he does not, I will, because I have been thinking too about places where someone like me would probably feel quite safe using a hearing-ear dog as opposed to some other kind of mechanism to warn me about dangers.

As parents, we are also concerned about the quality of all of these various tools that are available. To facilitate quality service, no matter what the tool is, for this particular program, it will be important to ensure that the hearing-ear dog program is appropriately regulated and that owners of hearing-ear dogs do not face discrimination in housing and public places just because they have a hearing-ear dog.

Provision for accreditation of the training and certification program for hearing-ear dogs, as well as safeguarding their use by requiring identification cards for the owners, would ensure a minimum standard for this service. This is very important. I know that the people who have already been involved in training hearing-ear dogs are very dedicated individuals. It would be important to build some kind of parameters around the training and the use of hearing-ear dogs, so that an owner can feel very comfortable that the dog he or she has has been appropriately trained and is reliable, etc. Right now the program is very small, but conceivably, as more people find out about this concept, more people will want it, and it is important to regulate the service before it gets too big.

Also, provision of legislation to protect owners against discrimination is important too, because it will allow hearing-impaired people the same opportunity in this particular sphere as visually impaired people. It is our belief that Bill 143, as it is written, provides for both of these concerns. The accreditation is mentioned and the fact that the Attorney General will be issuing identification cards. There is a safeness involved in the legislation, as well as equity, which is extremely important.

We are pleased as an organization to add our support to Bill 143 and we urge the standing committee on social development to recommend approval of the bill. Now I am going to turn the microphone over to my colleague, Bob Porter.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Rosemary. I presume that Jacqueline Harbour is hearing that this new awareness level is going to increase demands considerably, it seems. At least that is what the message seems to be.

**Mr Porter:** I would like to speak to this as a member of the board of directors of Voice for Hearing Impaired Children and also as a parent of a 13-year-old hearing-impaired son. At the moment we would not make use of a hearing-ear dog, but I am concerned that in the future, if that is one of the tools my son requires, it is available to him as an option. He is therefore a potential consumer of hearing-ear dogs. I think the equity issue is important, that hearing-impaired persons have the same rights and access as visually impaired persons.

A few examples that I was able to think of that I, as a parent of a hearing-impaired child, think would be useful would be more to do with security. My son does not wear his hearing aids to bed at night and therefore hears nothing. During the day, he makes very good use of his residual hearing and copes quite well. But at night, when many years from now he is grown up and married with a family, if he would like to wake up to a crying child at night-time, he will not, not without hearing aids on.

1640

The same sort of thing would be home security if there was something going on in the house that should not be going on, and smoke alarms are another major event. I do believe that the hearing-ear dogs are properly trained to cope with these many emergencies. Again, as a parent, I support what the committee is looking at here.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr Porter. Have we got any questions for the representatives from Voice?

**Mr Keyes:** Yes, I have one for Rosemary. It is unfair to ask, and I know you will not allow it, but I am sure that Jacqueline will listen to my question and maybe afterwards I will be able to get her to comment on it. The one flag that came up in my mind is what we are always hearing from people about, too much government regulation and red tape, and yet,

Rosemary, you just had in a very simple line there, "The provision for accreditation of the training and certification program for hearing-ear dogs."

The concern is that I think we want to provide the equity and access to service that is there now for the blind, but we do not, to my knowledge, provide that type of certification and accreditation and everything for dogs that are used as seeing-eye dogs, and that seems to work well. I guess I get alarmed from the standpoint of the trainers and the rest of them if we get too far into that aspect of it.

I think the security for the person who makes use of the service becomes the responsibility of the trainer, and the fact that the foundation continues to own the dogs. So it is not like where you try through government regulation and consumer and commercial relations to guarantee that the product is great when it gets to the consumer, who is the customer who has paid for it. I do not see it as being quite as essential when there is no way, in essence, of the trainers of the dogs perpetrating a fraud against the person who is going to use the service, because the onus is on the organization that trained to be sure that the dog is always a competent dog, meeting the needs of the person who will make use of the service.

I wonder if you just want to make a comment on that. It was the only thing that concerned me slightly, and I am going to ask Jacqueline after the session because I cannot ask her back again as a witness.

**The Chair:** Rosemary, would you like to answer?

**Ms Pryde:** I appreciate your bringing out the point, because certainly we do not want too many regulations. I guess there are two comments I would like to make.

First of all, it is my understanding that there is some sort of accreditation for seeing-eye—I am getting confused. I do not know whether you are getting confused between hearing-ear dogs and seeing-eye dogs; I am getting the words all mixed up. I think there is some kind of accreditation. Norah might be able to tell us a little bit more about that.

The second thing is, I am not concerned about Jacqueline. Jacqueline and her co-trainers are very dedicated people. What I am thinking about is 10, 15 years down the line, I do not know whether it is that complicated. I think it would be worth while finding out whether it is complicated to provide some kind of accreditation for the training.

It would just safeguard—you say the onus is on the trainers to provide a quality product, and certainly in a mass consumer market that is the case, because if the quality product does not exist, it will not sell. But I think in this case we are talking about the trust on the part of the hearing-impaired person for the "professionals" and I think it will just be important for us as consumers to know that there is some kind of safeguard, whatever it happens to be, and I am not really sure what. I do not want too much legislation either, but I think it is important to have something.

**Mr Keyes:** I hope that none of those become necessary because of people like Ron Brown and the Lions Foundation that are looking after the hearing-ear dogs, so that would be security.

**Mrs Stoner:** Just as a point of clarification, the Ministry of the Attorney General does provide accreditation for the schools and for the methods of training and the ministry must have proof that both the owners and the dogs have successfully completed their training course in an accredited school before they are issued their identification cards, which then removes the discriminatory factor. So the accreditation is already there, and



what this bill is asking for is precisely the same recognition and the accreditation of a non-profit training school, such as the one that Jacqueline Harbour runs, for the training of the dogs. But it is very much a matter of regulation and control and there must be that, as there is for the seeing-eye dogs. It would be precisely the same for the hearing-ear dogs.

**The Chair:** Does that satisfy your question?

**Mr Keyes:** That is fine, thank you. I was not aware; that is why I was asking the question. I did ask, was it there for the seeing-eye dog or not? No information that I had prior to today's meeting indicated that.

**The Chair:** I do not see any problem calling Jacqueline back if she thinks she has something to add to that from her experience. You have nothing to add to that?

**Mrs Harbour:** No.

**The Chair:** Okay. Are there any further questions?

Thank you very much for your insight and for your interest in the subject.

**Ms Pryde:** My pleasure.

**The Chair:** Members of my committee, I am very sorry I forgot at the beginning that our researcher, Ms Drummond, did offer and ask if I would sound you out to see if you wanted a summary of these hearings or if you wanted to just read your briefs yourselves. I do not think it is too late to ask you the question. Do you want a summary or will you have enough information before you and be able to digest it yourselves?

**Mr Allen:** My sense is that with the written and verbal submissions that we have, and I presume we will be getting Hansard, there is no need to have a summary of the hearings. It is not as though there are a lot of complicated data that we have to deal with and compare different submissions and arguments pro and con, so I would be quite happy with the documentation we are receiving as far as our working committee is concerned.

**The Chair:** Is that general agreement then? Okay. Well, Alison, you will not have to work through the night.

**Mr Allen:** It will not happen very often, Alison.

**The Chair:** Jill Johnson of The Howlers association, second call. Sorry.

## THE HOWLERS

**Ms Johnson:** Can you hear me?

**The Chair:** Yes. Thank you very much.

**Ms Johnson:** I have made copies for your reference of my first letter, dated 29 June 1988. It is explanatory about the effect my dog has had on my life and for my family to lead a normal hearing family life as well.

For some of you, meeting me for the first time, surprise may be the reaction that here is someone born with a hearing loss, classified as profoundly deaf by medical experts, both English and Canadian, who can talk just like you. If in fact this person has an invisible handicap and was integrated in English hearing schools, my source of communication is lip-reading all the time.

That is sort of my introduction. I do not think I will be speaking for 30 minutes, but I am honoured to be here to present my support for Bill 143, the Deaf Persons' Rights Act, formed along the same lines as the Blind Persons' Rights Act.

I would like to mention an incident that occurred at the close of the summer season last year. Perhaps many of you are

not aware that it is very common for another sense loss as well as the hearing loss. In my case, I do not have a sense of smell. Put me beside the smelliest garbage dump and I will not smell anything.

Interjections.

**The Chair:** Now we know the double whammy for Mrs Stoner.

1650

**Ms Johnson:** My head will pound and my stomach will be upset a few hours later. My family was at home, somewhere around the house, and I was in the kitchen preparing for supper. Toby, as usual, was in the room with me, despite the fact the family was home. I was cooking something in the oven at a very high heat, and when I opened the door of the oven, Toby came to me, bumped his head on my knee, his way of alerting me, and walked away. My concentration was on the supper, so I thought he was being silly and patted him on the head, but he was persistent and I had no choice but to follow him—right to the smoke alarm. Our back door is about four or five paces away from the smoke alarm, so he was pushing me to the door, which I opened and went outside. I finally became aware my family was not with me and tried to go back to the house, but was prevented very firmly from doing so by Toby.

To cut the story short, I finally got in the house, to find my children downstairs with the TV apparently blaring, so the children told me, and my husband reading the newspaper in the living room. He heard the smoke alarm but did not put much importance on it. This literally made me finally realize that, no matter whether a life or death situation, Toby works for me and for me only. Needless to say, we now have a fire escape plan.

Another incident happened shortly after receiving Toby in October 1987. I never realized how much at a disadvantage I was after arguments with my children, where they had ample opportunity to call me an old bag or similar names. For a while I was puzzled why Toby took me to the children after these arguments, but I guess he did not like his mistress being called names. Since then, the children have been very careful what they call me. Those are two little, but worth noticing, incidents that stand out in my mind.

But now to take a realistic approach, one day I will have to leave my home to move to a smaller place. That is dominant in my mind. With the way apartments and condominiums are behaving towards both pets and children, I know I would not get very far. Probably assurance of the cheapest, and the most humiliating accommodation could be provided because I have a dog, whether a dog guide or not. Sure, I would be protected under the Human Rights Code and similar other acts knowledgeable about hearing-ear dogs, but there is nothing in writing that can guarantee protection along the same lines as a seeing-eye dog and its owner. Both seeing-eye and hearing-ear dogs provide the same essential services as far as loyalty and companionship to their owners are concerned.

I have been very lucky with the people I have been associated with because of my upbringing and the ability to speak like a hearing person. I have to be realistic in realizing that that is an advantage for me, but later on I know I will come across unconscious ignorance, arrogance and insensitivity and will not know where to turn, because there really is nothing to protect a hearing-impaired person with a dog guide except what has been written by certain government departments.

"Dependency" is an ugly word, but "independence" is a beautiful word that cannot be described unless one has ex-

perienced it. I have experienced and still am experiencing this independence, loving every minute of it. I know my world would collapse should my hearing-ear dog in any way, and through no fault of his own, discontinue his service, loyalty and companionship. Technical aids do not provide the same requirements as a hearing-ear dog, although they do have their own advantages in many areas of necessities.

Thank you very much for listening to me. I would like to close by asking for your kind understanding and serious consideration for the need for Bill 143, the Deaf Persons' Rights Act.

**The Chair:** Jill, I do not know whether you know that you have also been on TV. I did not want to tell you before.

**Ms Johnson:** Pardon?

**The Chair:** As you have been a witness, you have been on TV as well. I am sure your friends will be able to see you. This will be broadcast.

**Mr Allen:** I must say that was a very moving testimony to the way in which a dog guide becomes very much a part of yourself. I wonder, when you refer to the protections under the Human Rights Code, the reference to the right of reasonable accommodation section, it really had not occurred to me how that would apply in the case of a person with a dog guide. Under that provision, would one normally be required to offer the accommodation of the person's interest in question—namely, the deaf person—by virtue of the reasonableness of having a creature with you that would facilitate your activity at that particular point in time or at that particular place? Do you know, Norah?

**Mrs Stoner:** It is my understanding that the rights do not apply to the deaf people to have their dogs. The fact that the blind have their act allows them the right to reasonable accommodation with their animals, but there is no such protection for the deaf person's animal.

**The Chair:** And does this legislation help that?

**Mrs Stoner:** This does that.

**Mr Allen:** Just speaking generally about that issue, surely that does not mean that the provision in the Human Rights Code would not apply unless there was a specific piece of legislation backing it up.

**Mrs Stoner:** I am not a lawyer, but as I understand it, people can and have been refused the right to live with their guide dogs because the landlord was not required to allow them to do that except in the case of blind people.

**Mr Allen:** Has there been a court case ever fought over that?

**Mrs Stoner:** No.

**The Chair:** Do you want us to ask Ms Drummond to do a little research on that?

**Mr Allen:** Do you know whether there has ever been a court case fought over the denial of a right to take your dog guide, or for a deaf person to take his or her dog guide with him or her, into a building or a public place?

**Ms Johnson:** I am not sure.

**Mrs Stoner:** They have only been in Canada since 1984.

**Mr Allen:** So it is a short period of time.

**Mrs Stoner:** It is a very short period of time. Seeing-eye dogs have been recognized legally for 50 years, so it is significantly different.

**The Chair:** Is that sufficient, Dr Allen? I wonder, Jill, if you could tell us a little bit about that fascinating story that you stated regarding your children and their vocabulary. Is that part of the training or is that something you worked on?

**Mr Allen:** Or did the dog just know?

**Ms Johnson:** In their childhood? Yes. I do not think so; I think it is something he picked up himself.

**The Chair:** More from tones, maybe?

**Ms Johnson:** Yes, I think so. What happens is the dog is given basic training to alert it to the sound of the doorbell, telephone, smoke alarm. They have to distinguish the difference between someone knocking on the door and maybe a child throwing blocks on the wall at the same time. The dog has to know the difference, but you actually keep your dog so you can train your dog to alert you to other noises that are not part of the training. The training can only train the dog to the basic noises, like the alarm clock, the timer on your stove, the kettle whistling.

I was absolutely floored the first few times when Toby took me to my kids after they had arguments. I asked them, "What's wrong?" They said, "Oh, nothing," looking very innocent. It is just one particular word, which I am not going to say to you because it is not very nice, but I think when he heard that particular word, then he took me to the children. They know that if they come up with any kind of bad word that does not sound—I think he goes by the tone of voice. That is what it is, the tone of voice. So I always get the last word. My children do not; they have to mouth it. That way the dog cannot hear it.

**The Chair:** That is silence at least.

**Ms Johnson:** Maybe I could train your own dog that way.

1700

**Mr Allen:** Of course, you do not have to train dogs to do everything. They do have some intelligence and instincts of their own. One of the things that I have noticed, having had dogs in the family, is that if you are angry with a dog, it will often come to you to make up. It will come and try to re-establish the relationship. But I am sure that what is happening in this case is that the dog is sort of taking that step in the family. The dog hears the angry voice or the discordant noise or the bad word, which always has a certain tone to it, knows who it is directed to and then tries to bring the person, as the dog would, to that person in order to re-establish the relationship again. I think that is one of the very interesting things about dogs. They want to preserve relationships at all costs.

**Ms Johnson:** On another occasion last year, a whole group of us were in the Canine Vision Walkathon. You are not supposed to take your dogs off the leash, but my girlfriend and I decided to take our dogs off the leash. We were walking along and then Toby stood in front of me. My girlfriend decided to carry on talking. Her dog was getting a little upset because my dog would not join in the fun. Then the next thing there were five cyclists going by and he would not let me go; he was telling me to stay there. Five ladies were behind me on bikes and went by. That is another way.

The most recent one was when I was walking back from dropping the children off at school during a snowstorm and a car wanted to turn right. The snow was blowing in my eyes and



Toby put himself in front of me and he would not let me cross the road until the car had turned right.

If anything happened to him, I do not want to go back to the dependency; I want to keep the independence. That is what the dog is doing for me. He is giving me that independence. He has helped me to get out. He has helped me to get more involved in public activities. That is what he has done for me. I am just one person who is really happy about the hearing-ear dogs. I am sure there are others with their own reasons. But if we had this Bill 143, it would mean the world to us. It really would. It would be something that we could look on as ours. It is a funny way of putting it.

**The Chair:** Members of the committee, Reverend Peter Virtue has been in contact with our clerk, Mr Decker, and he unfortunately has had an emergency arise this afternoon and will not be able to be with us. Unfortunately, he will not be able to fit us into his schedule tomorrow either, so we will not be able to hear from Reverend Virtue. This being the case today, I could call an adjournment. Is there, however, anything you would like to say before I do that?

**Mr Keyes:** Yes. First of all, Reverend Virtue may have a written brief that he was going to present to us. We could receive it that way and still have the benefit of it.

**The Chair:** Yes, that is a very good idea.

**Mr Keyes:** On the other one, I do not want to belabour it, but I just want to go back because I have now just had a chance to peruse the document that Jacqueline provided for us. Maybe it could just be clarified. I was asking the question about payment for the dog, whether there was any or not. I think the comment was made that as long as they were sitting in the seat beside you, etc, but as I read through two or three of these, there seems to be some discrepancy.

Just for the record, because people who read this may challenge what we currently have in Hansard, as I look at Canada Coach Lines, it does not include where it said "the attached page 2, item 10, of our standard passenger tariff," where it incorporates hearing-assistance dogs. They did not attach it in what we have here so I am not sure what their policy is. But the airline one from Air Canada does. GO Transit appears to say they are the only animals allowed on the GO system, but in the Air Canada one it said, "Dogs trained to lead the blind or assist the deaf are accepted free of charge within the cabin when accompanying passengers...provided they are harnessed properly and do not occupy a seat."

There seems to be a distinct difference there, that they can be with them in the cabin but must not take up a seat, which was the question I was asking before. There may be other clarification, but that seemed to be the only one. I was not as sure about the trains because they do not have it here, but someone did say that Via Rail does charge. So I think we have a

mixed reaction as to which is the situation. We should just keep it as clear as we can.

**The Chair:** My experience with the airplanes is that they usually fly on flights that are not totally full and that they do occupy an aisle seat and stretch under the middle seat as well, if they are large dogs. That is what I have seen up to this point. So I do feel that Air Canada is likely pretty accommodating.

Would anyone like to make any comments about these statements that Mr Keyes has just made? They could be significant.

**Mr Keyes:** I just wondered if Jacqueline had anything further. Again, I hate to be pestering Jacqueline. This is twice today, but she did the research I am looking at. Could she give us the regulations from Canada Coach Lines, where it says it is covered in item 10, page 2.

**Mrs Harbour:** With Canada Coach, the people who travel do not pay. Everyone we have spoken to has not been charged for the dogs as long as the dogs do not occupy a seat.

**Mr Keyes:** All right, the same idea, no charge but no occupation of a seat.

**Mrs Harbour:** That is correct.

**Mr Keyes:** That would be similar, then, to what Air Canada is saying, no charge for the dogs as long as they do not occupy a seat.

**Mrs Harbour:** Yes.

**Mr Keyes:** Then the clarification for Via: Are they charged for the dog whether the seat is occupied or not? Do you know?

**Mrs Harbour:** That is what I understand. I think it is half-price they charge them.

**Mr Keyes:** I think that will keep the record fairly straight.

**The Chair:** Actually, some very sophisticated musicians, as you know, pay for a seat for their instrument. So maybe some owners would want a seat for their dog. I do not know.

**Mr Keyes:** That is right. If someone is playing a Stradivarius, I guess he does not mind the price of the seat in order to have it accompany him to the performance.

**The Chair:** I want to thank the members of the committee and all of the witnesses today. This has certainly been a very interesting item to be brought to our committee, a little bit different than some of the other things we have dealt with up to this point this year. I want to thank you again and call this particular meeting of the standing committee on social development to an adjournment for today. We will be back together tomorrow at 3:30.

The committee adjourned at 1708.

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## STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

**Chair:** O'Neill, Yvonne (Ottawa-Rideau L)

**Vice-Chair:** Neumann, David E. (Brantford L)

Allen, Richard (Hamilton West NDP)

Cunningham, Dianne E. (London North PC)

Elliot, R. Walter (Halton North L)

Fawcett, Joan M. (Northumberland L)

Grandmaître, Bernard C. (Ottawa East L)

Jackson, Cameron (Burlington South PC)

Johnston, Richard F. (Scarborough West NDP)

Keyes, Kenneth A. (Kingston and The Islands L)

Stoner, Norah (Durham West L)

**Clerk:** Decker, Todd

**Staff:** Drummond, Alison, Research Officer, Legislative Research Service

### Witnesses:

#### From the Lions Foundation of Canada:

Brown, Ron

#### From Hearing Ear Dogs of Canada:

Harbour, Jaqueline

#### From Bob Rumball Association for the Deaf:

Beveridge, Wendy

#### From the Voice for Hearing Impaired Children:

Pryde, Rosemary

Porter, Bob

#### From The Howlers:

Johnson, Jill

#### Private Citizen:

Beam, Dorothy





## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Second Session, 34th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Deuxième session, 34<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Tuesday 1 May 1990

**Standing Committee on  
Social Development**

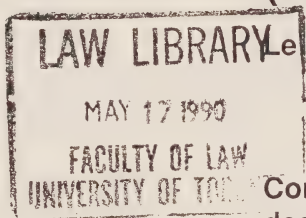
Deaf Persons' Rights Act, 1989

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Le mardi 1 mai 1990

**Comité permanent  
des affaires sociales**

Loi de 1989 sur les droits  
des sourds



Chair: Yvonne O'Neill  
Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : Yvonne O'Neill  
Secrétaire : Todd Decker

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Tuesday 1 May 1990

The committee met at 1655 in room 151.

### DEAF PERSONS' RIGHTS ACT, 1989 (continued)

Consideration of Bill 143. An Act to provide for Certain Rights for Deaf Persons.

#### OSHAWA DEAF CENTRE INC

**The Chair:** We are proceeding with our hearings and the completion of the hearings on Bill 143 today. We have a witness from the Oshawa Deaf Centre Inc. Once that is completed, I hope we will be able to proceed to clause-by-clause, and if we are very fortunate we will be able to complete that today.

Please come forward, Kathy Hyatt. I am very sorry that you have been a victim of the uncertainty of legislative procedure, but now you know the kind of flexibility that is—

**Mr Allen:** That is a neutral way of putting it.

**The Chair:** Thank you. Please sit down in the chair and begin, Kathy. We had a very interesting day yesterday and I am sure you will round it off for us.

**Mrs Hyatt:** I hope so. First of all, I would like to say that I am honoured to be here today representing the Oshawa Deaf Centre and to be able to speak in support of hearing-ear dogs. I am going to begin with a little bit of background on the Oshawa Deaf Centre.

The Oshawa Deaf Centre is an agency serving the deaf and the hard-of-hearing. It is not only for the city of Oshawa; it is for all of Durham region. I stress that because quite often people do not realize that.

Back at the beginning of the 1980s decade, a group of people met in an Oshawa church to talk about the need for a sign language course to be offered in the area. It was from this meeting that the seeds of the Oshawa Deaf Centre were sown.

Fred Walker, founder and first executive director of the centre, was instrumental in establishing a sign language course at Durham College. Many of those taking the course were parents of deaf and hard-of-hearing children. These parents began pressing for other services to be offered in Durham region, so it was in March 1981 that the Oshawa Deaf Centre opened its doors in a tiny bachelor apartment on a street near the Oshawa General Hospital.

By the time the Oshawa Deaf Centre received its incorporation status in May 1982, it had moved up to sharing with two doctors the main floor of a small house on Simcoe Street. Our present-day location at 750 King Street East in Oshawa was made possible by the Oshawa Central Lions, which had befriended the Oshawa Deaf Centre early on. Our beautiful century-old home was given us by the Lions in 1986.

More important than the physical structure of the Oshawa Deaf Centre are the dedicated people involved in these services. ODC has been able to provide services such as counselling, technical aids and job placement, and the establishment of a summer camp in 1982 for deaf and hard-of-hearing children. These were previously unavailable in Durham region and they were now being offered.

It was through the efforts of Fred Walker, his wife Iva, a deaf social worker and co-founder of the Oshawa Deaf Centre, and through the very committed volunteers that these were being accomplished.

The Oshawa Deaf Centre was directly responsible for the installation of the Tty in the offices of the Durham Regional Police Force, a service which, on the advice of the Oshawa Deaf Centre, was upgraded this past November with the installation of a dedicated phone line solely for Tty users. I might add that this is a very important step because in the past, when somebody was using the Tty, he or she would call the general police number and the lady answering the phone would answer this. She would have to transfer the call to the person nearest the Tty phone. By the time he got to the Tty and set it all up, a very important call could be lost. So this, we feel, is a very good, positive happening.

As well, Ttys were installed in the Oshawa Manpower office and at the local distress centre, which was then able to offer a 24-hour answering service for the deaf and hard-of-hearing. This 24-hour service has since been disbanded due to the introduction of the Bell relay service. You will find that you have a little green folder there explaining the Bell relay service.

**The Chair:** Thank you for bringing those along.

**Mrs Hyatt:** You are welcome.

ODC acted as the consultant on Tty's two other local institutions, including the vocational rehabilitation services office, and it eventually had a Tty installed.

Approximately 44% of our funding comes from the United Way. This is supplemented through private donations, the generosity of service clubs, especially the continuing support of the Oshawa Central Lions, fees for service, memberships and fund-raisers. Our volunteer board of directors consists of 10 members, half of whom are deaf or hard-of-hearing. These board members are elected yearly.

Founder Fred Walker is now executive director of the Bob Rumball Association for the Deaf. Of the three permanent full-time staff currently at ODC, the current executive director, Raymond Richer, is deaf. Our day program assistant, who we have been fortunate to get on a government grant for a year, is also deaf and she serves as an excellent role model for the clients in our day program.

We have been blessed through the years with wonderful volunteers, both deaf and hearing, who have assisted us in various capacities. Last year this number of volunteers totalled 118, of which we are really proud. They do not come on a day-to-day basis, but if there is a job to be done you can usually get someone to do it for you and it is wonderful.

You have a sheet before you listing some of our current services. In our day program, we presently have four adult deaf plus clients. We do not actually have any services for children at the moment. However, we do have an annual children's Christmas party for them and it is very well attended. It is probably one of our biggest events.

Along with the services mentioned thus far, something else also happens at the Oshawa Deaf Centre, and this is public awareness about deafness. Public awareness, a very important

element in educating people about this invisible handicap, is an ongoing goal of the Oshawa Deaf Centre. More and more the needs of the deaf and hard-of-hearing are being brought to the fore, not only in our area but throughout Canada. Bill 143 is a good example.

More and more in the media you hear of the deaf pushing for their rights, with American sign language and education rights getting top billing. But there are other equally important issues facing the deaf and hard-of-hearing and Oshawa Deaf Centre advocates on their behalf.

Earlier you heard reference to deafness being called an invisible handicap. Because it is not readily apparent, like when you see someone in a wheelchair, the hearing world still does not fully grasp and understand its full significance. I would like to take a moment to talk a little of a personal experience that happened not too long ago.

I was talking to someone whose spouse is deaf. What happened is this person was born with hearing loss in one ear and as the person has got older, and particularly in the last year, the hearing has gone more. Of course it is stressful for the individual himself, and it is stressful for his wife and his children, but the problem seems to be with his hearing parents and siblings who have a smarten-up attitude—smarten up and hear.

You certainly would not ask someone in a wheelchair: "Hey, cut that out. Get up and walk." But this family seems to have this attitude that he should smarten up and hear and it is putting extra stress on the whole family. If situations like this occur, how can one expect recognition of the need for deaf-accessible buildings or the need for interpreters? The deaf and hard-of-hearing, though, are slowly making progress and passage of Bill 143 would be a very big and important step in the right direction.

When the Oshawa Deaf Centre was asked a few years back if it would be willing to have available in its office information and applications for hearing-ear dogs, we immediately and strongly said yes. We have had demonstrations given at our centre by Corky, accompanied by Jacqueline Harbour, to educate our people and the public at large about hearing-ear dogs. We have given our support to the Howlers, the local volunteer support group for Hearing Ear Dogs of Canada. We do this through updated information in our newsletter, the availability of materials in our office on hearing-ear dogs, and referrals. We also have applications at our office for hearing-ear dogs.

Hearing-ear dogs accompany their masters to our centre for visits on business matters and on social occasions, and the clients in our day program just love to see them come in.

I would like to take a few minutes to comment on a few personal observations. I know when I first heard of hearing-ear dogs I was quite excited about it. A lady I met through work and who has since become my friend was very instrumental in getting me excited about this. I remember receiving a call and her coming into the office talking about a dog she was due to receive. Of course, I thought she meant in another few days, but no, she meant this was springtime; it would not be until the fall. So as the day got nearer, we were getting more and more excited. I think I shared her excitement. At least I could feel it.

The day came when she was going to bring the dog in to introduce him to all of us at the centre. I can remember not hearing her come in. We are in a big, old house and one of the features of the old house is that there is a large cupboard underneath the stairs to hang up your clothes. I had met other hearing-ear dogs in that time between the spring and the fall and they were all tiny little dogs, so of course I was expecting a tiny little dog. Imagine my surprise when I walked through the hall

to go to another part of the building and this lady was in the closet hanging up her coat, so I did not know she was there. I came around the corner and there was this huge German shepherd sitting there. Needless to say, I was a little taken aback. What my friend had not shared with me was that she was used to German shepherds and she had specifically requested that a German shepherd be trained for her.

I think I have seen a difference in this individual since she has owned the dog. The lady herself is really quite an independent person, but I think the dog has helped her even more. I think she has grown personally within herself and in the work she is now doing for others in helping other deaf and hard-of-hearing people.

There are a couple of little funny things associated with this too. There is another instance with this same lady where if the children are fighting in the other room the dog comes and tells her. I am sure they really appreciate that.

Another thing: One day the dog was trying to get the lady's attention when they were in the car and he kept nudging her. She really did not pay attention to it at that point. She came to a corner and someone was pointing at the car so she thought, "Well, gee, maybe I'd better stop and look." Sure enough, some piece of the car was dragging along on the road. The dog was trying to tell her: "Look, there's a problem. You'd better stop."

Another story that we have heard at our centre is about a lady whose dog was trying to get her to go down to the basement. She was ignoring the dog and ignoring the dog and finally she decided, "Okay, I'm going to check," and she found there was water in her basement.

Another incident is when one of our people's dogs warned about a burglar. He had not been trained specifically for that noise, but the dog knew enough and he foiled the burglary attempt.

There is another lady in our centre who has got a hearing-ear dog and I think it has given her a good sense of companionship and independence, but also, since she has received the dog her husband has passed away. I think now more than ever the dog is not only a good companion but a comfort to her as well.

From a personal point of view, observing just these few things, the differences in the people, I think it would really be morally wrong to deny access and to discriminate against hearing-ear dogs and their owners. I would also like it to be legally wrong and therefore I personally would like to see it passed and made into a law so that action can be taken.

Next year the Oshawa Deaf Centre will be celebrating its 10th anniversary. Since its inception we have needed to redefine and expand our services and programs in order to accommodate our growing pains and meet the ever-growing needs of our people.

Two of our goals for which we have submitted proposals to the government are the establishment of a group home for the deaf and hard-of-hearing in Durham region. This is very important. There are group homes in Durham region, but there are none to meet the special needs of the hearing-impaired. The other proposal we have before the government is the implementation of a new literacy and life skills program.

1710

The thing that stands out all through the years is that the need to serve the deaf and hard-of-hearing does not go away; it only multiplies. Again, Bill 143 exemplifies this. Ten per cent of the population is deaf or hard-of-hearing and their percentage is expected to increase due to the escalation of noise pollution.



Therefore, it is very conceivable that the need for hearing-ear dogs can only be expected to increase as well.

A hearing-ear dog is a living, breathing technical aid, a right arm to its owner. But I think of equal importance to the job the dogs can do is the companionship they offer, which helps to alleviate the isolation and loneliness the deaf and hard-of-hearing often experience. Tantamount to all of the foregoing, the dogs give a sense of independence—I really feel most strongly about this—a very basic right any human being should be allowed.

Therefore, speaking on behalf of the Oshawa Deaf Centre, its board of directors, members, staff and the community we serve, we fully support and endorse Bill 143 and strongly urge the speedy passage of this bill.

**Mrs Stoner:** Kathy, you refer to a deaf-accessible building. What is that?

**Mrs Hyatt:** Someone read over my speech and asked that too. I think people do not realize—again, I will go back to the wheelchair example. If you see someone in a wheelchair, you know, “Gee, we have to have a ramp for someone to enter this building,” but what about the deaf or hard-of-hearing infrared systems and the FM systems to help aid in hearing? What about strobe fire alarms? We have people who are living in rented town houses, for instance, and we have had the landlords approach us and they cannot understand: “We have a fire alarm there. What do you expect from us?” That is different. They need the strobe lights that warn. The deaf and hard-of-hearing cannot hear a normal fire alarm, so to really be accessible to them, they need a light that is going to flash and let them know there is trouble. That is really basically what I wanted to get across as deaf-accessible.

**Mrs Stoner:** It is a new concept.

**Mrs Hyatt:** Yes.

**Mrs Stoner:** That is great. Thank you very much for coming and for your patience. I hope you do not catch a cold.

**Mr Allen:** I do not have a question, but I do want to thank the Oshawa Deaf Centre for all the good work it has done over the past 10 years in its centre, and I guess before. I appreciate the fact that you have come and made a presentation as extensive as you have on behalf of the bill. We are looking forward to supporting this bill without amendments, although we would support amendments if somebody has a good proposal to make. We do not have any problem with that.

**The Chair:** We are at the stage now where we are ready to look at the actual piece of legislation. The question has already been posed informally and I will pose it formally. Are there any amendments to Bill 143 as we have it before us? If not, then may I consider sections 1 through 7 are carried?

Sections 1 to 7, inclusive, agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill agreed to.

Bill ordered to be reported.

**The Chair:** With that, I would like to offer my personal congratulations to Mrs Stoner, a member of our committee who has had this as one of her goals. She has been a member of the Legislature and has achieved that goal for all those who came before us. I would like to thank my committee for its co-operation in being present this afternoon.

**Mr Elliot:** I would like to add my compliments to the member for Durham West for proposing this bill as well. I am going to

be supporting it for a reason that when we started these hearings yesterday, I really did not realize. My wife is deaf in her left ear and after yesterday's discussion, which I found very meaningful, we had quite a chat last night about this.

Anne has not been receptive to having a dog as a pet, but one thing that has bothered her a lot recently is that if she is sleeping and her deaf ear is up, meaning her hearing ear is down, all kinds of sounds are not heard by her at night. So as of last evening I think she is very receptive to seriously looking into having a hearing-ear dog, and this makes me feel a lot better, because on occasion I cannot be there.

It is a bit of a problem when you have somebody in your own household who really is in jeopardy because of this kind of situation. These are the kinds of things that this kind of discussion has a bearing on, so I very personally would like to thank Norah Stoner for having the initiative to put this bill forward at this time.

**The Chair:** I do think we will have more dogs in training. It is nice to know that we do some meaningful things in this Legislature that really help other people. I am always very happy when our committee is part of that process. This certainly is one of those times.

**Mrs Stoner:** I would just like to thank all of you for your support and your help, and, Mr Elliot, you for your comments. You are the second member of the Legislature who is now getting a hearing-ear dog for his wife. I am very pleased that we have got it this far. Hopefully it will carry in the House and become law. I thank everybody who came, everybody who wrote and everybody who participated here.

**The Chair:** With unanimous support, it looks very hopeful. Thank you all very much.

**Mr Allen:** Madam Chair, speaking of doing things for people, what is on our agenda and what do we look forward to in this committee?

**The Chair:** I have had a request from one member that is not yet refined regarding something from the Office for Disabled Persons. I have not been able to get enough information to have a steering committee meeting. Then of course, as you know, it is very likely that we will be doing the health professions legislation review. It has been spoken about quite often.

**Mr Allen:** Are we any closer to a date for that?

**The Chair:** I cannot tell you that, Mr Allen. As you know, Mr Neumann asked the question in the House and the date was given as some time in late May. I have not heard anything different from that. It all depends, of course, on when our Minister of Health introduces that in the House and it is referred to us. I would imagine it would be referred to us rather immediately and I would imagine we would get—

**Mr Neumann:** It has to go through second reading first.

**The Chair:** Yes, but I think right after second reading it would be coming here. Right from the beginning, personally, I felt that would be a summer exercise and it may happen that way. That is all I can go on now.

**Mr Allen:** So that is it.

**The Chair:** Those are the two things I have had request for at this moment. I certainly would hope we would be able to proceed with some of those.

The committee adjourned at 1717.

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Keyes, Kenneth A. (Kingston and The Islands L)

Stoner, Norah (Durham West L)

**Clerk:** Decker, Todd**Staff:** Drummond, Alison, Research Officer, Legislative Research Service**Witness:****From the Oshawa Deaf Centre Inc:**

Hyatt, Kathy



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S-6 1990

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## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 35th Parliament

## Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Monday 3 December 1990

### Standing committee on social development

Organization

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 35<sup>e</sup> législature

## Journal des débats (Hansard)

Le lundi 3 décembre 1990

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Organisation



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Monday 3 December 1990

The committee met at 1530 in room 151.

### ORGANIZATION

**Clerk of the Committee:** Honourable members, it is my duty to call upon you to elect a Chair. I am open for nominations.

**Mr Beer:** I nominate Mrs Caplan to be named Chair of this committee.

**Mr Martin:** I second the nomination.

**Clerk of the Committee:** Are there any further nominations? I declare the nominations closed and Mrs Caplan is elected Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. I am pleased to assume the Chair. I look forward to working with everyone. I have had an opportunity to serve on committee before. I feel that it is an extremely important part of the legislative process and that all members should have an opportunity at committee to participate in meaningful debate.

The selection of a Vice-Chairman, I think, is the next order of business. We will do that. Are there any nominations?

**Mrs McLeod:** I nominate Mr Cordiano.

**Mr Owens:** I second the nomination.

**Mrs McLeod:** I would indicate that I am nominating him in absentia but he has agreed to accept the position, I understand.

**The Chair:** Are there any other nominations? Motion carried.

The appointment by the committee of subcommittees: Any discussion on this matter before we proceed to do this? I have asked the clerk to give us a presentation on the workings of committees so that we can answer any questions any of the members have, but it is my understanding that the subcommittee has three members and that the Chair acts as the Chair, of course. There is one member from each caucus and there is substitution permitted on that committee as there is on the committee as a whole. So for the purpose of the subcommittee what we could do, if it is acceptable, is to have the whip of each of the caucuses as the official appointee to the subcommittee. Then that can change by substitution if that is agreeable to everyone, if the whips want to discuss that or if anyone wants to actually be nominated. What is your pleasure?

**Mr Beer:** We had a brief discussion and I think that would be fine with all the whips.

**Mr Owens:** I so move.

**The Chair:** So Mr Owens would move that the whips from each caucus form a subcommittee with the Chair as chairman. A seconder for that? Mr Beer. All in favour? Carried.

The third matter on the organization agenda for today really involves the business of the committee and the operations of the committee. If the members would like, the clerk could take us through some of the procedures, how the committee works, what everyone's role is and so forth. Is that something you would like? Okay.

**Clerk of the Committee:** I have handed out a couple of documents to you and the research officer has handed out a document that she will address which will explain the role of the research officer as well.

The document that I would like to address has the title, "Powers of the Chair." The powers of the Chair of the standing committee are substantially the same as those of the Chair of the Committee of the Whole House. The standing orders provide that a Chair maintain order and decorum and decide all questions of order and procedure. These are the same duties that the Speaker or the Chair of the Committee of the Whole House would be conducting in the House.

The decision of a Chair is not debatable and is only subject to appeal by a majority of members. That is in the form of a motion directing a decision by the Speaker on the Chair's ruling and that is covered under standing order 118. Normally the Chair does not vote. If you have a situation where you have an equal number of votes in the committee on any given matter, then the Chair will cast a vote, being the deciding vote. Other than that, the Chair does not normally participate in the general debate of the committee. However, the Chair has the right to secure the progress of the business of the committee.

**The Chair:** Are there any questions from anyone on that first part as to the role of the Chair or on what it means to secure the progress of the business of the committee?

**Clerk of the Committee:** The role of the clerk in the committee is that of an impartial servant of the House, assigned to work with the committee by the Clerk of the House. We are the principal adviser on rules, procedures and practices of the House in its committees. Our main contact is with the Chair, but we are available to answer questions of all members of the committee.

In addition to the procedural role, we are the chief administrative officer for the committee and we operate in this role subject to the direction of the Chair and the committee or members of the committee in the form of a subcommittee. We have the responsibility for the day-to-day administration of the committee and its needs. We, as clerks, are required to be present, not only just at the meetings of the full committee but also at the meetings of the subcommittees.

The committees have several areas of having work assigned to them. We have the situation where the House may refer legislation in the form of either a government bill, a public bill or a private member's private bill. Also,

there may be subject matter referred to the committee from the House. Those items are usually contained in the form of the terms of reference, which may be expanded to include time frame or may be restricted only to just the referral of the subject matter or the bill.

Under standing orders 104 and 106, a committee may study any item that falls within the policy field of the committee, and in this particular case the committee is responsible for the ministries of Community and Social Service, Education, Health, Colleges and Universities, and Skills Development, and to those responsible for senior citizens and disabled people. Under those areas of responsibility there are agencies, boards and commissions and they also can fall within the subject matter that the committee can study under standing orders 104 and 106.

There is another provision that the committee may study certain subject matters, and those subject matters can be studied under standing order 123. That standing order allows for each caucus, once in each calendar year, to designate a subject matter that can be studied for a total time of not more than 12 hours. During that time the committee may wish to study the matter and just have particular items going on the record. It may wish to write a report.

When that designation by a caucus comes to a committee, it is referred to the subcommittee and that subcommittee puts together the specifics of the study the committee is going to do. When the subcommittee reports back to the committee, the report from the subcommittee on standing order 123 is deemed to be adopted. This means it cannot be amended. Anything that is contained within that document must remain the same. The areas of study, again, are the same as for standing orders 104 and 106 within the policy field of the committee.

1540

If there are any questions you would like me to address, I would be happy to do so. I have also provided a document to you regarding designated matters under standing order 123. It is quite extensive, the reason being that this standing order is new. It just indicates to most members of the committee just how they should proceed. There is also a copy of the letter that you would submit to the Chair and the clerk when you designate your particular matter.

**Mr J. Wilson:** I have a question of the clerk and yourself, Madam Chair. Can we today submit a matter for designation under section 123?

**Clerk of the Committee:** You can submit that at any time, in the form of the letter to the Chair, myself or both, preferably both.

**The Chair:** I thought the whips might want to meet following this organization meeting to discuss that and any other orders of business, to prepare for the next meeting of the committee. I know that kind of request can be made at any time from any member, noting that each caucus can only make that request once during every sitting.

**Mr J. Wilson:** For the record, I would like to submit a designation today, if I may, on behalf of my colleague the member for Waterloo North, Elizabeth Witmer, who is

unable to be here because of inclement weather. Although I will not be on the subcommittee—she is the designated whip—I would like to meet with the whips after proceedings today.

**The Chair:** I am sure the whips will be pleased to meet to discuss those issues. Are there any other questions or comments at this time? I will just note that there were two subcommittees to be established; one was the business subcommittee and the other was the subcommittee on committee business. The wording that was proposed by the clerk was that we do compose the business subcommittee and that said subcommittee meet from time to time at the call of the Chair to consider and report to the committee on the business of the committee and that substitution be permitted on the business subcommittee and that the presence of all members of the business subcommittee is necessary to constitute a meeting.

I think it is the same wording for the subcommittee on committee business. If it is acceptable to everyone that we use those wordings, I think we will probably make the clerks' lives a little bit easier. All right. What we did, however, was to have all three whips appointed to both of those subcommittees, and the Chair.

The distinction between the two is the reporting process. The other one is that the subcommittee on committee business be appointed and that it report to the committee on the business of the committee and that substitution be permitted, that the presence of all members of the subcommittee is necessary to constitute—so they are both the same, with the reporting process being slightly different.

So that is done and corrected. Any other comments any member of the committee would like to make?

**Ms Drummond:** If everyone could turn to his lurid green sheet, Lynn has gone over in quite a lot of detail what the committee does. This explains in general what the research service has done for committees. I am just going to go over it very quickly to elaborate on what has been done by research in the past in this particular committee.

The first task, of working with the subcommittee and committee to plan research requirements, of course, is pretty straightforward. The second item, on preparing background papers, has not been used a great deal in this committee, although in the last session it was used under the 12-hour rule. I prepared a briefing on food banks in preparation for those hearings.

The other two that are relevant are the last two. The ongoing summaries of submissions and evidence to the committee have been particularly useful in the past for this committee, partly because often the social development committee is looking at rather complex bills. What we do is, we take all the witnesses' submissions and summarize them with reference to each clause of the bill so that as you look at section 1, you see what everybody has said that is relevant to that. That becomes useful if there are 100 sections.

The other thing that has been useful in this committee is that often, because of the nature of the subjects that social development deals with, not all of the people



appearing before the committee are accustomed to appearing before the House, so they do not always even have written briefs, do not always address legislation in a very specific way. In the past the committee has found that portion of our work quite useful.

Finally, drafting the committee's reports to the House: The food banks report is the last time, in the last session, that this service was used. Again, because of the time constraints under that rule, they seemed to have found it very useful.

The only other thing I would like to emphasize is that it is customary for the committee's research request—that is, research that would be distributed to the whole committee—to come through the Chair, but any member can raise that with the Chair, either in committee or in subcommittee. That would often happen. Somebody would know of work that might be useful to everybody, so that would be given to the Chair and distributed to the whole committee.

Finally, in the last sentence it notes that members can speak to the researcher privately to arrange confidential research for their own purposes, which is what the service does for all members at all times.

**The Chair:** The research service is excellent. I know that all members will take advantage of it, as well as appreciate it. I am looking forward to the work of the committee.

We welcome the leader of the Progressive Conservative caucus.

Unless anyone has any further items of business, or anything he would like to discuss at this meeting, I would suggest that there is time, if the three whips want to meet for the first subcommittee meeting, to set a time. We could do that.

**Mr Beer:** I just have one question. The 12 hours that are given over to the study of a particular topic, each party can do that once in a session or a calendar year?

**Clerk of the Committee:** Once each calendar year.

**Mr Beer:** So if we want to do something in this calendar year, we have to do that before—

**Clerk of the Committee:** You do not have to actually conduct the business, but you have to be in receipt of the request and the subcommittee must report on the matter eight days before the last sitting day. The committee cannot receive the subcommittee's report in the last eight sitting days before recess.

**Mr Beer:** Which would mean that in order to deal with the request we would have to—

**Clerk of the Committee:** —receive the subcommittee report by Thursday.

**Mr Beer:** I just wanted to be clear, because it would mean that anything dealt with in this calendar year has to be done before Christmas.

1550

**Clerk of the Committee:** To be dealt with?

**Mr Beer:** Yes.

**Clerk of the Committee:** But if it has been received, it could be dealt with, if there is time, in the next calendar year.

**Mr Beer:** And would that count as the 12 hours for that?

**Clerk of the Committee:** It would count as the 12 hours for this calendar year. Although the committee did not have time to deal with it, it would be counted. Say, for example, it was dealt with in January, it would not be counted as the 1991 request for that caucus if it was received and dealt with by the subcommittee before that time.

**Mr Beer:** I just want to be clear. In other words, the motion that was placed before us today by our colleague, if the committee decided to do that, it could also be done in January, for example, and would not count as 1991?

**Clerk of the Committee:** Provided the subcommittee's report is received on Thursday. If the subcommittee meets tomorrow and decides to deal with the item, then it can be—

**Mr Beer:** As long as we do that before Thursday.

**The Chair:** This committee has authority to sit Mondays and Tuesdays, so really the subcommittee would almost have to deal with it today and table the report tomorrow or seek special authority to sit on Thursday, which it may or may not get from the House leaders. Is there anything else from any members?

**Mr Beer:** I suggest, in order not to get into a lot of discussions with House leaders in rearranging things, that perhaps we try to meet so that we could report briefly tomorrow. We would not need a long meeting, but if we could report tomorrow then that would deal with that request within the context of 1990, if that is agreeable. Shall I make a motion to that effect?

**The Chair:** If there is agreement, a motion is not necessary.

**Mr Beer:** So we would meet tomorrow briefly to deal with a report from the subcommittee?

**The Chair:** The full committee would meet tomorrow at 3:30, immediately following question period.

**Mr Beer:** That is the traditional time to meet, at 3:30. If this committee room is being used for something else, then we can—

**Clerk of the Committee:** You are assigned to this room.

**The Chair:** So there is a request that the committee meet again tomorrow, immediately following question period, to deal with this matter. As far as the procedures are concerned, if another caucus wanted to present a request, does that have to be done at full committee, or can that be presented to the Chair prior to the committee and dealt with—

**Clerk of the Committee:** The request may be sent to the office of the Chair and/or the clerk. It does not have to be tabled in the committee.

**The Chair:** Is everyone clear on that?

**Mr Hope:** Could we have some clarity on what you just said?

**The Chair:** The request from a caucus can be made directly to the office of the Chair or the clerk and can be

dealt with by the subcommittee without being formally tabled at the committee. If your caucus wanted to table something prior to the meeting tomorrow, it could be dealt with.

**Mr Malkowski:** Could you please clarify the roles? I just want to clarify the role of an interpreter here so that you will facilitate my participation in this committee. Those individuals wishing to bring a point, please raise their hand, and I would ask the Chair to please identify that person prior to speaking. That would assist me in participating in this committee.

**The Chair:** You would like me to identify by name the member who is making a request?

**Mr Malkowski:** Any time any member of the committee participates in the discussion, I would appreciate it if each member would raise his or her hand and then you, as the Chair, identify the individual who is going to be speaking, prior to his making his point or speaking at all in the committee.

**The Chair:** Two signals were used commonly in committee. One was to raise your hand to signify that you want to be on the list and then the Chairman will call out the name on the list in order and, from time to time, mention who is next on the list or how long the speakers' list is.

The other thing I have done in the past in meetings is, if someone has a question, rather than just asking to be put on the list as a speaker, to use the question mark, which says you have a specific question, usually based on remarks of the person speaking. If that is acceptable, you can try that.

**Mr Malkowski:** But, Chair, if you would not mind identifying the member when they are speaking.

**The Chair:** All right. Mr Hope.

**Mr Hope:** Randy is fine, Elinor. I guess we can go on a first-name basis. Just to elaborate a little on Gary's points, as this is a unique committee in itself due to the simple fact that Gary is deaf and needs an interpreter, it

would be most appropriate that members take a little time in their comments to help the interpreters keep up to speed so that Gary is able to participate fully in the program we are about to enter into.

I do not know if we want to get into "Mr Beer" or "Mrs McLeod." I would suggest that if first names are not offensive to anybody, I would really keep it more personal. I think we are supposed to work together on trying to develop something and I think the first-name basis would be most appropriate.

**Mrs McLeod:** I think there can be a collegiality in first-name basis outside the formal record, but I would ask for some clarification in terms of the formal record. We may need to have a formal identification.

**The Chair:** That has been the practice in committees. Then when we speak to each other, informality takes over. But it has been my experience that in committee, for the record it does record the member's formal name.

**Mr Beer:** I would just add that as we go along, if there are any other things that would help our colleague to understand what we are doing, I think we would all want to help in any way. Perhaps somewhat tongue in cheek I would just say that every now and then some members do sort of suddenly blurt something out. As long as we understand that that is part of the parliamentary tradition as well, I am sure we can deal with ensuring that Gary is aware of who is speaking and what we are saying and all of those things.

**The Chair:** I think there is a desire from everyone on the committee to ensure that we facilitate not only the special needs of individual members, but encourage the participation of all members. As part of the role and responsibility of the Chairman, I will do everything I can to both facilitate and encourage that to happen.

Anything further? The meeting is adjourned. We will meet again tomorrow at 3:30.

The committee adjourned at 1558.



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### Standing committee on social development

Organization

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Première session, 35<sup>e</sup> législature

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Clerk: Lynn Mellor

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Tuesday 4 December 1990

The committee met at 1610 in room 151.

### ORGANIZATION

**The Chair:** We have a quorum. The subcommittee met to consider requests by two of the caucuses, and gave direction to the clerk, who will have two reports very shortly. The suggestion is that we might want to have a cup of coffee and reconvene in half an hour to consider the two reports that the clerk will table on the approach to dealing with the two items that have been presented, one by Mr Wilson and Mrs Witmer and one by Mr Beer, Mrs McLeod and Mr Cordiano. Agreed?

The committee recessed at 1611.

1653

**The Chair:** I call the meeting to order. I have just received from the clerk reports which are being distributed. I have been asked to read the reports into the record. I will read the first one, then discussion, if there is any, then I will read the second one, if that is agreeable.

Report 1 of the subcommittee, standing committee on social development:

"The subcommittee met on Tuesday 4 December 1990 pursuant to standing order 123 to consider a report to the committee on the following matter designated by Mr Wilson (Simcoe West), for Mrs Witmer, for consideration by the committee:

"The funding, availability, accessibility, adequacy and quality of children's mental health services in Ontario and the need to improve these services. This matter to be considered for a period of 12 hours.

"It was agreed:

"That the proposal by Mrs Witmer be considered by the committee as follows:

"That the public hearings be conducted the week of 14 January 1991; if there is government legislation referred to the committee, then this matter should be considered at the first possible date upon completion of the government legislation;

"That the committee invite the following to appear:

"Alex Thomson, president, Ontario Association of Children's Mental Health Centres; Dorothy Easton, executive director of Kinark Child and Family Services; Peter F. Cassel, superintendent of special education, Lambton County Board of Education; Burt Vanden Heuvel, superintendent of special education, Lambton County Roman Catholic School Board; a representative of the Canadian Mental Health Association; Philip Ogden, director, Beechgrove Regional Children's Centre, Kingston; Mary Lou Moir, co-ordinator, Mary McGill Community Mental Health Centre, Alliston; Barry Falls, co-ordinator, Robert Thompson Youth and Family Centre, Cookstown; Mike O'Brien, director, Collingwood branch of the Simcoe

County Children's Aid Society; Vic Graham, Waterloo County Board of Education;

"And authority be given to the subcommittee to make any necessary changes to this list and to allocate the time for each appointment of each witness as may be required, and to ensure the schedule allows time for the committee to consider the final draft of the report;

"That the subcommittee be authorized to give direction to the research officer writing the report and to give its approval to the final draft of that report;

"That the Chair be authorized to table the report in the House upon receipt of the final approved draft; and

"That the Chair may table the report in one language and when the translation is available the Chair will then table the supplementary document in the second language."

**Mr Silipo:** Madam Chair, I know authority has been requested for the subcommittee to make any necessary changes. Does that also include any additions or changes to the list of people?

**The Chair:** Changes include additions and deletions.

**Mr J. Wilson:** I am just a little confused about the approval of the report. Does it mean the subcommittee gives final approval to the draft?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mr J. Wilson:** It does not quite say that, but I would assume that.

**The Chair:** The paragraph says, "authority be given to the subcommittee to make any necessary changes to the list and to allocate the time for each appointment of each witness as may be required, and to ensure the schedule allows time for the committee to consider the final draft of the report." That is after it has been approved by the subcommittee. I have had clarification from the clerk. Do you want that to be clearer?

**Mr J. Wilson:** Well, I think we would all agree that this is the way it is going to happen. I was just worried about the next paragraph which says, "and to give their approval to the final draft of that report," referring to—

**The Chair:** That is following the final draft.

**Clerk of the Committee:** What would happen here is that the subcommittee would approve the final draft, then it would go to the full committee for final approval.

**Mr J. Wilson:** Okay. I am not quite sure that is what this says, though. I appreciate that it was written up very quickly.

**Mr Beer:** Excuse me, Madam Chair. Perhaps "after the final draft of that report which would then be submitted to the committee."

**The Chair:** That should clarify it.

**Mr Owens:** Further to Jim's question: At which point would dissent to a committee report be entertained and how would it be recorded?

**The Chair:** At which point would—

**Mr Owens:** If Jim, for instance, dissented on the whole committee report on the issue submitted by Elizabeth Witmer, how would that dissent be registered? What kind of opportunity would Jim or any other member of this committee be given to prepare a report on that dissent? Would it be tabled along with the report?

**The Chair:** I am going to ask the clerk to clarify the specific procedure for dissent.

**Clerk of the Committee:** If there is a dissenting opinion to a report when it is written, the dissenting opinion is appended to the report when the report is tabled. Therefore, the people submitting the dissenting opinion must make sure it is available to the clerk of the committee in time, when the report itself is being printed, so that it can be incorporated into the report.

1700

**Mr Beer:** That is the standard way of doing that in all of our reports, to make sure that the dissenting report, if there is one, is printed as part of the record.

**The Chair:** Any further questions?

**Mr Malkowski:** Just a point of clarification, if I might. Is the list of names for speakers open? For example, is it open to individuals?

**The Chair:** I am not clear on what you mean by "open." The subcommittee—

**Mr Malkowski:** Is it limited to those individuals only who are listed in this report or—

**The Chair:** No, the authority is there for the subcommittee to change, add or delete. This is not a comprehensive list.

**Mr Owens:** I just wanted to add to your comments, Madam Chair, that it would be up to Gary or anybody else to approach their respective caucus to add to that list if they have individuals or groups that are interested in appearing before this committee.

**The Chair:** Yes. This committee has struck a subcommittee, and each of the whips were appointed as members of the subcommittee along with the chair. Members of the individual caucuses will meet with their whip and decide on instructions to the whip, or the other thing that is very common is substitution back and forth on to these committees as agreed to by the caucus. Any other questions on procedural matters?

**Mr Silipo:** I was just looking at the other report we are going to be dealing with and wondering if during the time that the House does not sit does this committee sit only on the two days that are assigned to it, Monday and Tuesday afternoons, or are there additional days on which we can also sit?

**The Chair:** When the House is in session the two days which are allotted time to the committees are Monday and Tuesday, as you know, in the procedures agreed upon by the House leaders. When the House is not in session, it

is determined by the amount of business that is referred to the committee by the House leaders and it is upon agreement of the House leaders. What will often happen is that the subcommittee, that is, the business subcommittee that was struck, will recommend to the House leaders how much time it feels it needs and when it would like to sit and then the House leaders will agree. I believe that is the correct procedure. Is that clear?

**Mr Owens:** In terms of co-ordinating our committee responsibilities, will that be done through the House leaders, or is it up to us to say, "Okay, my other committee is Legislative Assembly." We can be going backwards and forwards for a long time trying to determine dates.

**The Chair:** What will happen, according to past practice, is that the House leaders will agree what work is assigned to the committees. The subcommittee will then sit to order its work, decide how much time is needed and report back to the House leaders. This affects the budget that has to be approved by the Board of Internal Economy as well. I have asked the clerk to prepare a standard budget in anticipation of what would be considered a normal workload for the intersession period, but that will be discussed by the subcommittee when we see what work comes before us. These are the first two pieces of business the committee has decided to deal with, but government bills always take precedence. Are there any questions?

**Mr Martin:** Yes. I am just wondering—probably for all of them, it would be the same question—about northern Ontario and getting representation from there on these things so that we hear from them, because certainly children's mental health is even more acute in some of the concerns up there. Are there intentions to bring people down or to go up there? Are there any resources available to bring folks in?

**The Chair:** At present, the committee has no budget. That is one of the matters the subcommittee will have to discuss and ultimately the Board of Internal Economy would have to approve. One of the opportunities you have as a member of the caucus is to discuss issues such as that with your member of the subcommittee who can then raise that at subcommittee meetings when the business is ordered.

**Mr Beer:** If I might, just to make very clear that when we were setting out names, the ones that are there should really be seen as examples. They were in no way to exclude others. In the normal course of events, we would have had time to work all of that out before coming back with our report, but because we have to get agreement before Thursday, that is why we have said that the subcommittee, having heard each of the whips going back to his own caucus, will then be able to get other names and we will be able to meet in terms of setting our budget to make a proposal.

Your point is well taken, that we would want to hear from some groups, individuals from the north, and strike a budget that does have to go to the Board of Internal Economy, which makes the final determination. I think that is something we would all feel we would want to make sure of, that that voice was heard.



Any of those things, even perhaps some other points, may come to mind after we finish this afternoon. Would you transmit those to Steve? Then we, the whips, are meeting next Tuesday to try to finalize the list of names and times and that sort of thing. We have basically a week to try to do that, because we want to give people notice so they can prepare whatever it is they are going to present. There will be about a month. With Christmas and everything, it will be tight to the 14th and the 21st.

**The Chair:** On the list of requests to speak, I have Mrs McLeod, Mr Owens, Mr Malkowski and Mr Hope.

**Mrs McLeod:** I had actually just raised the same point Mr Martin raised with our own members of the committee, because I do think it is important that we find some way of recognizing that the problems relating to children's mental health in northern Ontario take on quite a different form in terms of the ability to provide service to northern communities.

The other group of people who may have some unique needs that the committee might want to understand are francophone people. I think that might be another group, that we try and determine the adequacy of children's mental health services for Franco-Ontarians.

It is such a complex and widespread area that we may need to take a focus, but if we do that I hope we recognize that we are focusing to the exclusion of some other concerns that should be identified and addressed at a later point.

**Mr Owens:** As a general question, to try and allay some of the concerns of Tony and Lyn, has it been the practice of this committee to be a travelling committee?

**The Chair:** This is a relatively new standing order, 123, and the clerk informs me that no committee has travelled during the 12-hour standing order 123. However, it is the practice of the committee to schedule travelling time during the intersession. That is something the subcommittee can discuss on whatever work is before it.

**Mr Owens:** Has it been the practice of the committee to provide interpreters for francophone appearances?

**The Chair:** Yes, in designated areas translation services are provided.

**Mr Owens:** By way of Bill 8 or by designation of the committee?

**The Chair:** Under Bill 8, under the provisions of the legislation.

**Mr Beer:** I just want to note that here, of course, it is all done automatically.

**Mr Malkowski:** Do you have a system of informing individuals who may wish to have their issues made known to the committee? What would your form be? For example, if an individual could not attend, would it be possible for them to send perhaps a videotape, an audio tape or some written materials? Would those options be available to them, not only attending at the scheduled time, but those other options as well?

**The Chair:** The committee, through the subcommittee, can determine what kind of representation and presentations they are prepared to accept. In the past, videotapes

have been received by the committee and have been made available to individual members for viewing. As well, written briefs and so forth have been submitted to committee and shared.

1710

**Mr Hope:** I just want to point out something. When I was listening to Mr Beer talk, you were talking about finalizing a list before Thursday, and in here it says that alterations to a list through the discretion of the committee will be able to change from time from time. I just wanted some clarity when you were saying that by Thursday you wanted to finalize the list.

**Mr Beer:** What I said was that in order for us to have these hearings we have to have agreed as a committee to do that by Thursday. In the normal course of events, we might have had several weeks in which to then plan who the witnesses and so on would be. We do not have that. That is why we have directed that the subcommittee would sit down next week and try to finalize the list of people who would come before the committee, or whether we would travel and what other kinds of material we would receive. This is just to give us flexibility so that on the one side we have approval for these two hearings, and the flexibility to ensure that we have before us the people we feel we need to have.

**The Chair:** Just to clarify for all members—I do not think everyone was here yesterday—we were informed that in order to be able to deal with these matters in the calendar year of 1990, that consideration had to be made and reports received by this committee before Thursday. These are the two reports that we are considering today, which will allow this committee to consider these matters under the calendar year of 1990.

**Mr Hope:** Just to put my question directly then, after Thursday can we alter the list?

**Mr Beer:** Absolutely.

**Mr Hope:** Okay.

**The Chair:** This report empowers the subcommittee to have the flexibility to amend the list as required. That is exactly what the wording of this report does.

**Mr Martin:** "As required" does not mean necessarily before Thursday.

**The Chair:** No; ongoing.

**Mr Cordiano:** I simply want to make the point that consideration should be given as well, when adding to the list in both of these reports, to groups where we perhaps need to be more culturally sensitive. For example, in the city of Toronto there are a great number of children of immigrant parents and there are difficulties associated with those individuals and those groups. I think that a great more has to be done in that area. I think we have to keep that in mind. I do not see that in the two reports here by the subcommittee, so I would like to support that initiative, if possible, when you are deliberating on your subcommittee.

**The Chair:** All right. The committee has received report 1. Committee report 2—I will read that out for the committee:

"The subcommittee met Tuesday 4 December 1990 pursuant to standing order 123 to consider a report to the committee on the following matter designated by Mrs McLeod, for Mr Beer, for consideration by the committee:

"An evaluation of the service mandate for individuals with developmental handicaps, developed by the Ministry of Community and Social Services, to determine: if the intent of the multi-year plan is being met; the adequacy of the existing plan; and barriers to future implementation.

"For the committee's reference, the ministry's new mandate for services to people with developmental disabilities in Ontario states:

"—retain, wherever possible, a developmentally disabled child with his or her family,

"—develop community-based support programs and residential programs,

"—encourage the development of a developmentally disabled adult's full occupational potential; and

"—phase down large institutions."

"This matter to be considered for a period of 12 hours.

"It was agreed that the proposal by Mr Beer be considered by the committee as follows:

"That the public hearings be conducted the week of 21 January 1991 following the completion of the first report of this subcommittee; if there is government legislation referred to the committee, then this matter should be considered at the first possible date upon completion of the government legislation;

"That the committee invite the following to appear:

"Peter Cluterbuck, independent consultant; Beth French, National People First/Canadian Association for Community Living; Marg Price, Home Again; Doug Carton, executive director, Brockville Association for Community Involvement; Bill Allerton, Community Living, Mississauga; Linda Till; Patrick Worth, People First; Ray Rempel, Ontario Head Injured Association;

"And authority be given to the subcommittee to make any necessary changes to this list and to allocate the time for each appointment of each witness as may be required, and to ensure the schedule allows time for the committee to consider the final draft of the report;

"That the subcommittee be authorized to give direction to the research officer writing the report and to give their report and to give their approval to the final draft of that report;

"That the Chair be authorized to table the report in the House upon receipt of the final approved draft; and

"That the Chair may table the report in one language, and when the translation is available, the Chair will then

table the supplementary document in the second language."

And for clarity, we agreed to add at the end:

"That the subcommittee be authorized to give direction to the research officer writing the report and to give its approval to the final draft of that report, which would then be submitted to the full committee."

**The Chair:** Any further discussion? The committee has received both reports. Would any member like to raise another matter of business at this time?

**Mr Hope:** Just the point that was made yesterday by Lyn McLeod about us using first names in these hearings. Has any clarity come out on that?

**The Chair:** For the purpose of Hansard, we generally recognize the member formally, but then in discussion, informality is a practice of most committees.

**Mr Hope:** Why I ask is so that I do not be offensive to the females of the committee, whether they are married or not married. I would not like to make a false gesture of calling Ms or Miss. I think it would be appropriate that we have some kind of indication, because that is why I just hesitated on saying the member across. I think it would be appropriate that we have, whether married or not married, last names.

**Mr Cordiano:** Why do we not just use the generic term of Ms?

**The Chair:** The clerk informs me that to change all of the name plates for all the members of the Legislature for committee purposes would cost about \$3,000. It might be easier if we just let you know that we would be happier with Miss or Ms individually. That should solve the problem.

**Mr Owens:** I thought we had agreed that if I wanted to speak to Lyn, I could address her as Lyn. For the purposes of Hansard, when you identify Mr Owens or whatever, that is how we do it.

**The Chair:** I thought that was what I said in response to Randy's question, that is, that for the purposes of Hansard I would identify the speaker by the formal name, but for the purposes of discussion we would be informal. Ms Witmer?

**Mrs Witmer:** Mrs Witmer is fine. I am wondering why this is such a significant issue. When I have sat on other committees or boards, we usually referred to one another as Mr and Mrs.

**The Chair:** Could I suggest that perhaps you discuss that with Randy later and work it out?

The committee adjourned at 1719.



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**Vice-Chair:** Cordiano, Joseph (Lawrence L)

Beer, Charles (York North L)

Haeck, Christel (St. Catharines-Brock NDP)

Hope, Randy R. (Chatham-Kent NDP)

Malkowski, Gary (York East NDP)

Martin, Tony (Sault Ste Marie NDP)

McLeod, Lyn (Fort William L)

Owens, Stephen (Scarborough Centre NDP)

Silipo, Tony (Dovercourt NDP)

Wilson, Jim (Simcoe West PC)

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**Clerk:** Mellor, Lynn

**Staff:** Drummond, Alison, Research Officer, Legislative Research Service





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## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 35th Parliament

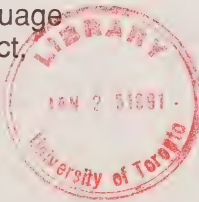
# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Monday 17 December 1990

## Standing committee on social development

Education Amendment Act  
(Miscellaneous) 1990

Ottawa-Carleton French-language  
School Board Amendment Act  
1990



Chair: Elinor Caplan  
Clerk: Lynn Mellor

Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario  
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## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 35<sup>e</sup> législature

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Le lundi 17 décembre 1990

## Comité permanent des affaires sociales

Loi de 1990 modifiant la Loi sur  
l'éducation (dispositions diverses)

Loi de 1990 modifiant la Loi sur le  
Conseil scolaire de langue  
française d'Ottawa-Carleton

Président : Elinor Caplan  
Greffier : Lynn Mellor

Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario  
Éditeur des débats : Don Cameron

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Monday 17 December 1990

The committee met at 1537 in room 151.

### EDUCATION AMENDMENT ACT (MISCELLANEOUS), 1990

Resuming consideration of Bill 12, An Act to amend the Education Act.

### OTTAWA-CARLETON FRENCH-LANGUAGE SCHOOL BOARD AMENDMENT ACT, 1990

### LOI DE 1990 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LE CONSEIL SCOLAIRE DE LANGUE FRANÇAISE D'OTTAWA-CARLETON

Resuming consideration of Bill 13, An Act to amend the Ottawa-Carleton French-Language School Board Act, 1988.

Reprise de l'étude du projet de loi 13, Loi portant modification de la Loi de 1988 sur le Conseil scolaire de langue française d'Ottawa-Carleton.

**The Chair:** I would like to call the meeting to order. This is a meeting of the standing committee on social development. Bienvenue. I would like to welcome the Minister of Education today.

The committee will have to decide for the future, and I suggest perhaps the whips would like to discuss this, whether we wish to begin at the appointed hour for committee meetings as soon as there is a quorum present or whether it will be the practice of the committee to wait for representation from all three caucuses. All substitutions for the committee from the caucuses must be made within 30 minutes of the meeting being called to order. This is the first public hearing that we will be holding as a new committee and I thought you might want to just think about that as we proceed.

These are formal hearings. We are today going to be considering Bill 12 and Bill 13. I would like to point out that following discussions with all three caucuses, the clerk was in touch with all board umbrella groups and all teacher umbrella groups after she had the discussions and the direction from all three caucuses. An invitation to appear before the committee was also extended to the Ottawa-Carleton French-Language School Board, public sector.

According to our meeting time and schedule, the first is l'Association française des conseils scolaires de l'Ontario, AFCSO. They are scheduled for 3:30.

There is one matter that I would like to clear up before the hearing begins. Everyone will have the full 30 minutes, but for discussion by the committee there is the question of, if there are additional representations or requests from individual school boards, what is the wish of the committee? There are some options that can be considered. One is to request seating for an additional day; second is to determine that no individual boards will be heard in person but

in fact can submit written briefs before the committee, or any other options that members can think of that I have not considered.

We are, according to our schedule, hearing depositions all day today until 5:30 this evening and all day tomorrow. At 5 pm the expectation is that clause-by-clause will begin. As we begin these hearings, I want to just make sure that everyone is in agreement with that agenda and ask for advice.

**Mrs Cunningham:** We have a number of requests coming through our office. I am not certain whether the other members do, or other parties do. I am just wondering, given the complexity of this piece of legislation and not knowing just what the witnesses are going to tell us, at least not in detail—you mentioned one option being another day's hearings. Is there no option, depending on what we hear, for the committee to meet during the break? Is that another option?

**The Chair:** You are talking following recess when the House is not in session.

**Mrs Cunningham:** Yes.

**The Chair:** That is another option of course, to hold it over.

**Mrs Cunningham:** Looking for direction from you then, Madam Chairman, depending on what we hear today, I would certainly serve notice that I would like to put that motion forward and leave it as an option. I can put the motion forward now and we can vote on it at the end of the two days, but I would certainly like to serve notice that I would move that we do sit during the break, depending on the number of requests that we get to speak to the committee. I think it is an important issue.

**The Chair:** I do not think a motion is necessary at this point. If you like, we can determine tomorrow at the start of the day's hearings, once we see what requests are here, in fact what we want to do about the agenda.

**Mr Owens:** Because of the type of time constraints we are under, I do not think it is going to be a viable option to hold hearings during the break, in that we should try and fit everyone in within the framework as set out under the agenda that has been submitted today.

**The Chair:** I may stand corrected then. Is it the wish of the committee that we settle the agenda and the time line for moving into committee of the whole today?

**Mr Owens:** Yes.

**The Chair:** All in favour of doing that now, doing that today? All opposed? The decision is that we will settle now the time line of the committee. So your motion is in order, Mrs Cunningham.

**Mrs Cunningham:** I am not sure that everyone here knows what the requests have been. We certainly have

three lists. We discussed with the Clerk's office what would be appropriate, certainly, as did the other House leaders, with regard to the next two days, but depending on what comes out of the hearings, I am not sure what the rush is to make a decision on that. Anyway, given that the majority of the committee has ruled, I would move that we would sit during the break, or "after the recess" I suppose would be more appropriate, to hear deputations with regard to Bill 12, specific to school boards that may in fact be affected by this legislation.

**Mr Martin:** The very reason we are here today and not five days down the line is that we wanted to get this legislation back on to the floor of the House before the break so that the things that are suggested in the bill could move forward to meet the time lines, the municipal elections of 1991. The reason we are here today as well is so that we can get that done as quickly as possible.

To speak to the other piece of it, I personally have not received a lot of calls from others who want to be on the agenda of the committee. I have certainly heard from the umbrella organizations wanting to speak to it and I certainly understand where they are coming from. They want a chance to have some input into this legislation. Certainly, I am more than anxious to hear from them so that I might understand more fully what their concerns are. It seems to me that within the legislation itself there is ample room provided for input by those other groups, the individual boards, etc., once this particular piece of legislation is in place. Certainly it would be our intention at that time to be open to as much input as is possible and to travel far and wide to hear that input so that the people of this province will have and feel a great sense of ownership of the end product of all this, which is in fact to provide the French members of our province with some governance over their educational structures.

So I am speaking against going into the next session or meeting after the end of this week. I am also speaking to say that I think the input we will get from the umbrella boards will be sufficient at this point to move this legislation forward and for me to feel comfortable that it will in fact cover input by others as the whole thing unfolds and evolves.

**The Chair:** I have Mr Wilson on the list. I would point out that we have a full afternoon of public hearings. As well, we have one group scheduled for 5:30. We will have to not see the clock at 6 o'clock so that we can be sure to hear them fully. How long would you like to debate this matter? I leave it to the pleasure of the committee. Are you ready for a vote now, or did you want to speak, Mr Wilson?

**Mr J. Wilson:** I would like to make a point first. I really do not see—and perhaps someone can help, other than the explanation that has been given to date that this bill must be in place before Christmas, before the recess, because you want to be ready for the 1991 elections—how that precludes us from meeting during the break or after the break. There is still ample time to have this in place, I would think, for the 1991 elections later in the year.

Second, I would say that we are getting calls to our offices to the point that word is only now getting out forcefully on this piece of legislation. It is important that we hear from other groups that may want to come forward and I think we should leave that option open.

**Mrs Cunningham:** I am just wondering, is there going to be a presentation by the ministry at the beginning today?

**The Chair:** I have asked the minister if she wishes to make a presentation first. She has declined and wishes to have the public hearings begin immediately.

**Mrs Cunningham:** The reason I ask is that there is a package here, I think from the government, that is answering some of these questions around time lines. I just thought maybe the vote would be more appropriate later on because there was a question. It is going to take some response to the question that my colleague asked around the why. I think it is important that everybody understand the why, the time frame. If it is going to be presented later, it seems to me that the vote would be more appropriately taken after the explanation.

**The Chair:** The question that I have of you is whether you would like to withdraw your motion at this time or proceed to deal with it now. You have placed the motion.

**Mrs Cunningham:** The committee voted that it wanted it put, but I am just wondering now, given the question and the fact that we would be better able to vote after people get answers to questions. This was specific. I would be happy to put it in later.

**The Chair:** Mrs Cunningham is requesting the opportunity to withdraw her motion or postpone the taking of the vote until tomorrow. What is the wish of the committee? Agreed?

Agreed to. @N = **The Chair:** We will begin now with the public hearing portion. First deputation, bienvenue. The time is now almost 10 minutes to 4. You have 30 minutes for your presentation. I always say to people who come before the committees that they can use the time to make their presentation. We would ask that you allow time for questions and discussion with committee members. If, however, you use all of the time that has been allotted to you, there will be no opportunity for committee members to question.

#### ASSOCIATION FRANÇAISE DES CONSEILS SCOLAIRES DE L'ONTARIO

**Mme Gandolfo :** La présentation de l'Association française des conseils scolaires de l'Ontario ne prendra pas toute la demi-heure parce que nous aussi, nous voulons allouer le temps nécessaire pour dialoguer et répondre aux questions des membres du comité.

J'aimerais profiter de l'occasion pour vous remercier de nous avoir laissé la chance de vous adresser la parole cet après-midi et ainsi pour vous présenter les gens qui sont avec moi.

À ma gauche, Paul Rouleau ; il est conseiller scolaire au Conseil des écoles catholiques du grand Toronto et à ma droite M. Gilles Myner, qui est président de la section de langue française du Conseil des écoles catholiques de



Prescott et Russell. Mon nom est Lorraine Gandolfo et je suis présidente de l'association. Je suis également conseillère au Conseil des écoles séparées catholiques de Dufferin-Peel.

L'AFCSO, notre association, est active depuis 1944 dans le domaine de l'éducation. Nous regroupons les deux secteurs d'éducation, soit le secteur public et le secteur séparé. Nous avons applaudi les initiatives tant attendues par la mise sur pied d'une commission consultative afin de créer des conseils scolaires pour les francophones. Vous vous souviendrez sans doute, il y a plusieurs années, que l'AFCSO revendiquait, à toutes occasions, le droit pour les francophones de gérer leurs propres institutions.

Les conseillers scolaires francophones sont prêts à participer activement au processus de consultation. Ainsi, quand le comité rendra son rapport à la ministre de l'Éducation, les critères établis et les modèles élaborés seront représentatifs des besoins et des attentes de la communauté francophone.

À la suite de cette consultation, il serait regrettable, même déplorable, que les communautés qui satisfont aux critères et qui ont choisi leurs types de structures se voient dans l'obligation d'attendre les prochaines élections et se voient pénalisées par les procédures ou le processus.

De façon réaliste, il n'y aura pas une avalanche de conseils scolaires créés d'ici la prochaine année. Faire attendre la communauté qui est prête constituée, à notre avis, un autre exemple où les francophones doivent payer le prix des procédures.

La réglementation prévue par le projet de loi 12 permettrait au gouvernement, par l'entremise du ministère de l'Éducation, de réagir aux besoins réels et bien documentés des francophones en respectant leurs droits déclarés en 1982 et confirmés par la décision dans la cause Mahé de mars 1990.

Un autre point que j'aimerais mentionner et qui est touché par le projet de loi 12 a rapport à la représentation des conseils scolaires. Vous vous souviendrez sans doute, lors d'une entente hors cour, au printemps dernier : notre association, par l'entremise de son avocat et l'avocat du ministère, avait travaillé à la rédaction de quelques amendements au projet de loi 125 sur la représentation garantie.

La modification qui est présentée dans leur projet de loi 12, c'est-à-dire de déterminer la représentation pour la section de langue majoritaire basée sur le nombre d'élèves de cette même section, fait partie de cette entente. Nous ne voyons pas pourquoi ce qui a été décidé hors cour avec l'ancien gouvernement devrait faire état d'une autre série de débats.

Les conseillers scolaires francophones sont toujours prêts à travailler avec le gouvernement et à collaborer sur de nouveaux projets et nous vous encourageons à faire en sorte que la confiance que la communauté francophone mise sur ses politiciens ontariens ne soit pas trahie.

1550

**M. Rouleau :** Les seuls commentaires que j'aimerais ajouter au nom de l'association regardent évidemment l'importance de mettre en place les droits des francophones, tel que l'a dit la présidente, reconnus dans la cause

Mahé, particulièrement la référence dans la loi à des règlements pour déterminer le nombre d'étudiants et la division des conseillers scolaires.

L'absence de règlements dans la loi nous préoccupe dans le sens que cet aspect doit être devant nous le plus tôt possible pour que l'association puisse être satisfaite que l'ordonnance de la cour soit respectée en sa totalité. Alors, on demande la présentation d'un règlement le plus tôt possible.

Le deuxième aspect c'est évidemment l'importance, depuis la cause Mahé, d'avoir l'occasion comme communauté francophone de mettre en place des conseils de langue française où il y a eu consultations et où tout le travail de mise en place nécessaire a été fait, comme dans la région de Prescott et Russell. Je pense que ce projet de loi donne de nouveau au ministre le droit de mettre en place ces conseils. L'importance de cet article et des règlements qui devront être mis en place ne peut être minimisée.

**Mme Gandolfo :** Comme je l'ai mentionné au tout début, la présentation était courte mais ça a été fait de façon à nous laisser la chance de répondre à vos questions, à vos préoccupations. Nous apprécions la chance de pouvoir dialoguer avec vous. Alors, je n'ai plus rien à ajouter sauf que nous sommes prêts à répondre à vos questions.

**M. Beer :** Je pense qu'une des questions dont nous avons discuté jeudi dernier en Chambre n'était pas sur le principe du projet de loi mais surtout sur cette question de règlement. On comprend, surtout avec le cas de Prescott et Russell et de Simcoe, qu'il y a un besoin de définir ce qu'on veut faire. Il y a le comité que le ministre de l'Éducation a annoncé pour voir où mettre les conseils scolaires et surtout comment procéder avec Prescott et Russell et Simcoe. Mais je pense que, à la longue, nous préférierions une sorte de loi-cadre, disons, où à l'avenir il y aurait des lois pour créer des conseils scolaires, et non simplement par règlements.

Ici, ma question ne porte pas simplement sur la création des conseils scolaires de langue française, parce qu'en effet la province va créer les conseils scolaires de langue française et de langue anglaise. Alors, ma question spécifique : je comprends que vous n'êtes pas contre l'idée d'une loi-cadre pour créer des conseils scolaires. C'est dans l'immédiat où vous voulez voir que ça se fait par règlement pour assurer en effet que, dans le cas surtout de Prescott et Russell, il y aura bientôt des résultats parce que l'on a déjà fait des recherches, que l'on a eu des discussions et tout ça. Est-ce que j'ai bien compris ?

**Mme Gandolfo :** Oui, vous avez très bien compris, en effet, Monsieur Beer. Il va sans dire que, depuis qu'il y a une forme de gestion par les francophones de leurs propres écoles, l'autre étape a toujours été pour la communauté francophone des conseils scolaires. Maintenant, ce que notre association dit et répète à qui veut bien l'entendre, c'est que les conseils scolaires qui seront créés ou qui ont été créés doivent respecter les besoins de la communauté. C'est-à-dire, selon la communauté dans laquelle vous allez vous retrouver en province, les besoins vont être différents

et peut-être qu'il y aura à ce moment-là différents modèles de conseils scolaires.

Ce qui est important pour nous c'est que du moment où une communauté a déterminé ce qu'elle veut comme structure, à ce moment-là, qu'elle ne soit pas pénalisée, parce que le système fait qu'il n'y a pas d'élections avant encore tant d'années.

C'est pour ça que nous encourageons, justement, le gouvernement à agir et à adopter ce projet de loi qui nous permettrait de répondre à des besoins bien précis. Il y a deux communautés, entre autres, qui ont démontré de par leurs recherches, et ce depuis plusieurs années, qu'elles sont prêtes à assumer une gestion scolaire. Elles en ont déterminé un modèle. Alors, pourquoi attendre encore plus longtemps quand c'est déjà quelque chose qui satisfait aux besoins ou qui risque de satisfaire aux besoins de la communauté française ?

**M. Rouleau :** La seule chose que j'ajouterais en réponse c'est que la réalité est telle que l'établissement de conseils de langue française dans des régions est complexe et demande l'étude. L'aspect financier est une limite qui, je le sais pertinemment, empêche la création de conseils dans bien des régions. Jusqu'au moment où ces problèmes seront abordés, je ne prévois pas que la ligne soit bien longue, du point de vue de la communauté, pour créer des conseils de langue française. Alors, en réponse à votre question : oui, l'urgence se voit à Prescott et Russell où les problèmes financiers semblent être dans la mesure du possible.

À Simcoe, il y a encore des questions à aborder de ce côté-là, mais dans les autres régions la réalité est que la communauté n'a pas, en conjonction ou en travaillant avec le gouvernement, réglé le problème de financement. Ce n'est pas dans la Loi et cette absence, je crois, va limiter la portée de cet article certainement en ce qui concerne la communauté.

**M. Beer :** Merci.

**Mr Martin :** I hear you telling us that time is of the essence, that you have waited long enough, that you want this to move forward as quickly as possible and that you particularly, the French population, have had as much consultation as you just about need. Is that correct? What happens if this takes longer, in your understanding, of life as it unfolds re the French population in Ontario and this question?

**Mrs Gandolfo :** Well, several things can happen. Je crois premièrement que vous avez soulevé un très bon point. Monsieur Martin, quand vous dites que la communauté francophone se fait consulter. Je pense que s'il y a une communauté en Ontario qui est devenue experte en matière de consultation, c'est la communauté francophone. Mais par contre, cela ne veut pas dire que les francophones veulent être exclus du processus de consultation, ce n'est pas du tout le cas. Plutôt nous ce qu'on dit, c'est que nous voulons être consultés mais c'est une collaboration, une implication beaucoup plus active que nous voyons comme rôle.

Si les conseils scolaires ne sont pas créés, si le projet de loi ou le règlement ne s'établit pas, je ne veux pas être

prophète, mais je crois que la communauté francophone aurait de la difficulté à ne pas articuler son mécontentement par la voix des tribunaux.

Malheureusement, comme francophones nous avons souvent été étiquetés comme des gens qui avaient toujours recours aux tribunaux et on était toujours rendus là, mais je crois que c'est vraiment une possibilité. Vous devez aussi vous rappeler que depuis 1975, il y a des sections de langue française de conseils scolaires qui ont trois conseillers scolaires. Il était question qu'un amendement soit présenté pour faire passer le nombre de trois à cinq. Nous n'avons pas encore cet amendement. Alors, d'une part, le nombre est encore très limité et une section de langue française à l'intérieur d'un conseil majoritaire où il y a seulement trois conseillers scolaires, c'est quasiment inhumain. Le travail, le fardeau, la représentation que doivent assumer ces conseillers scolaires, c'est quelque chose ce dont vous ne pouvez pas vous rendre compte, j'imagine, tant que vous ne l'avez pas fait.

Alors, d'une part on est déçu de voir que encore on n'a pas l'amendement qui ferait passer le nombre minimal de trois à cinq. D'une autre part, si ce deuxième projet de loi ne s'établit pas, je crois que les francophones n'auront pas d'autres recours que d'aller devant les tribunaux pour faire valoir leurs droits parce que, comme je l'ai mentionné tantôt, ils sont prêts. Ça fait des années et des années, après consultations, après réflexion et collaboration que la communauté francophone est prête à assumer son rôle. Alors, si ça ne s'avère pas, je crois que ce serait une bonne possibilité.

1600

**Mrs Cunningham :** Interesting conversation. I want you to know right off the top that we had a number of concerns about the bill. One of them was not your having the ability to establish your school board now, even under this bill—as long as we have that clear from the beginning; I want to make it very clear. We have been told that if we voted against the bill we would be voting against minority language rights. That is not our intent. I wanted to tell you that right off the top.

I have a couple of questions. Do you have any comments to make with regard to the Haldimand-Norfolk purchase of service agreement that is part of this bill, the extension of Bill 30?

**Mrs Gandolfo :** Not particularly, no.

**Mrs Cunningham :** I was thinking that from our point of view it is a separate issue and it happens to be one of the reasons we voted against it. I was wondering if you had looked at that section of the bill at all to sort of help us out, because it does say, as opposed to the original Bill 30, the promise to the school boards that if there was an extension of funding, it would be phased in a year at a time. This bill in fact allows school boards, Haldimand-Norfolk and now other boards, to implement that extension all at once. It is a change in legislation. Your group has not had an opportunity to look at that. I suppose.

**Mme Gandolfo :** Je dois vous dire que nous n'avons reçu la copie du projet de loi que tout dernièrement, alors nous n'en avons pas discuté. Si vous parlez d'un



parachèvement en bloc, c'est-à-dire pour neuvième et dixième en même temps, si je comprends ce que vous dites, c'est quelque chose que j'imagine pourrait s'appliquer à la communauté francophone. Mais je ne peux pas vous donner une position face à ça, non.

**Mrs Cunningham:** Thank you. With regard to the bill itself, our great concern is—but we understand and appreciate what you are saying today and in fact agree with you—that in the future we would expect that the process would be followed according to the Ottawa-Carleton process where in fact we as legislative officials had an opportunity to take a look at that act that represented to us the agreement between the boards around funding, staffing and transfers of services and all the different issues that you will be talking about in your public consultation now.

Do you see that as being the end result of your discussions? Do you prefer that the government regulate your school board or do you prefer that in fact it be a specific act of the government eventually? I am not trying to have a hidden agenda here; I am just wondering what you see down the road.

**Mme Gandolfo:** Je voulais juste vous laisser le temps de mettre votre appareil avant de répondre. Je crois que ce qui est important pour nous c'est de voir ce que le comité consultatif ou le French Language Education Governance Advisory Group ou le groupe de travail, peu importe comment vous voulez l'appeler, aura à dire. Ce comité aura des consultations avec la communauté francophone et les différents intervenants et aura à établir des critères, aura à dresser et à préparer des modèles.

Maintenant, il est difficile pour moi de répondre à votre question d'une façon ou d'une autre tant que nous n'aurons pas pris connaissance du rapport que le comité de travail fournira à la ministre au mois de mai. Nous croyons que ça va être un rapport qui sera représentatif des différents modèles de gestion possibles en province qui répondront aux besoins des francophones. Je ne peux pas vous dire si oui, ça devrait être fait par projet de loi ou si par réglementation ce serait encore là l'avenue à suivre. Nous devons attendre le document final.

**Mr J. Wilson:** I represent the riding of Simcoe West, which is in the county of Simcoe, and I am just trying to get a better understanding—because over the weekend I had a number of discussions with constituents about this—of the need in Simcoe county and your views on that, given that about 4% of the student population is francophone. It certainly is difficult to explain to my constituents the need in that particular case. I can understand the need more so in Prescott-Russell, for instance, but the minister has announced the intention to go ahead there. I am also a little confused about the role of the advisory committee that will report in May, given that there has already been an announcement to go ahead in Simcoe county with only a 4% threshold. I would just like your sort of general comments on that, please.

**Mme Gandolfo:** La situation à Simcoe est différente de celle de Prescott et Russell, vous avez entièrement raison. Il reste qu'il y a une communauté francophone qui est vivante — comme vous le savez, c'est votre cir-

conscription — et ce de longue date. Il y a des écoles élémentaires, il y a une école secondaire et la communauté a décidé, en consultation, de passer à la prochaine étape, qui est un conseil scolaire de langue française. Le modèle sera très différent du modèle qui est préconisé par la communauté de Prescott et Russell mais ça, c'est à la communauté elle-même de le décider. Alors, si le gouvernement a jugé bon de procéder avec les négociations de Simcoe, c'est parce que cette communauté-là est prête, même si ça représente, comme vous le dites, 4 % de la communauté. Comme vous le savez, de par la loi, qu'il y ait un enfant ou qu'il y en ait dix, cet enfant-là a droit à une éducation équitable. Alors, que 4 % de la communauté ait un conseil scolaire, je crois que c'est tout à fait conséquent avec la décision du juge dans la cause Mahé de mars dernier.

Maintenant, ce que le groupe de travail devra faire c'est entendre d'autres intervenants, des participants de conseils scolaires, des représentants d'autres coins de la province, à savoir : qu'est-ce qui pourrait fonctionner ? Le modèle de Simcoe sera différent du modèle de Prescott et Russell et ainsi de suite. S'il y avait un modèle, comme exemple, pour la ville de Toronto, je suis certaine que ce serait très différent des modèles qui existent.

Alors, c'est comme ça que je vois le travail du groupe de travail. C'est une consultation afin d'en arriver à différents modèles. Le modèle qui fonctionne à Ottawa-Carleton ne fonctionnera peut-être pas ailleurs, mais je crois que ce qu'il faut faire c'est être assez flexible pour reconnaître que les besoins et les exigences sont différents et qu'on ne peut pas appliquer un concept partout en province.

1610

**The Chair:** I neglected at the start to ask the members of the delegation to identify themselves for the purposes of Hansard. Perhaps I could ask you to do that now. I would also thank you for appearing before the committee.

**Mme Gandolfo:** D'accord. Mon nom est Lorraine Gandolfo et je suis présidente de l'Association française des conseils scolaires de l'Ontario.

**M. Rouleau:** Mon nom est Paul Rouleau et je suis conseiller scolaire à la section de langue française du Conseil des écoles séparées du grand Toronto et je suis l'aviseur juridique pour l'AFCSO.

**M. Myner:** Gilles Myner, président, section catholique de langue française du Conseil des écoles catholiques de Prescott-Russell.

#### ONTARIO PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARDS' ASSOCIATION

**The Chair:** The next deputation is the Ontario Public School Boards' Association. It is now 10 minutes after 4. That will take us through until 20 minutes to. You have 30 minutes for both your presentation as well as questions and answers. I would ask that you begin by identifying yourselves for the purposes of Hansard and would welcome you to this committee.

**Mr Checkeris:** My name is Ernie Checkeris. I am a school trustee with the Sudbury Board of Education and

president of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association. Beside me is Penny Moss, our executive director.

The OPSBA is pleased to make a presentation to the standing committee on social development regarding Bill 12 and Bill 13. We appreciate the opportunity provided by the Legislature for further consideration of these bills by committee before third reading. We want to applaud the government for its intent to honour both the moral and legal obligations to the francophone minority of this province so that the creation of school boards, where numbers warrant and where suitable local arrangements can be negotiated, can take place in time for the municipal elections in 1991.

OPSBA fully understands the timetable constraints facing the government. We share the concern of all members that legislative changes affecting the 1991 school board elections should be passed in ample time to ensure orderly implementation. Obviously the provincial election, the subsequent transfer of government and the development of the new government's policy and legislative agenda has necessitated a tighter consultation schedule with respect to these bills. OPSBA would like to recognize the willingness of the minister, her staff and officials in the ministry to consider at this late date the advice of school boards on specific aspects of the bills.

Within the time available, we have given serious consideration to Bill 12 and Bill 13 and we have looked at ways in which they can be addressed while respecting fully the intent of the Minister of Education.

There are three issues involving Bill 12 for which we believe there are satisfactory amendments.

Regarding section 2, the creation of French-language school boards, as a matter of principle we believe that new governance structures for education should be created through the legislative process and not by regulation. Since there is now insufficient time to use this process for boards to be created for 1991 municipal elections, we support an amendment to section 2, limiting its application to the municipal term or until subsequent legislation for the establishment of French-language school boards is enacted.

Our recommendation therefore is that section 2 of the bill, amending subsection 11a of the Education Act, be revised to limit the time by which a French-language school board could be established by regulation.

With respect to section 5, extension by purchase of service, the provision set out in Bill 12 for extension of separate school education by purchase of service agreements between boards provides the necessary legal framework to accommodate the anomalous situation in Haldimand-Norfolk. The separate and public boards in this area are satisfied with the outcome of local negotiations between the boards and the Ministry of Education. Obviously if extension by purchase of service is to be available to some Roman Catholic school boards, then it should be made available to others, but that is not the issue.

We have studied the legislation to the best of our ability in the time available and we remain convinced that the role of the Planning and Implementation Commission on advising the Minister of Education is unclear. It seems that a board may be able to extend its secondary grades by

purchase of service and subsequently decide to operate its own secondary school grades. Only then is the involvement of PIC required.

This may be a minimal concern where the purchase of service is with a neighbouring separate board. However, the remaining unextended separate boards are in northern Ontario, where, because of geography, purchase of service is likely to be from the coterminous public board. The result of extension by purchase of service will have three consequences:

1. Extension will not provide separate school education to the students.
2. Extension will produce a loss of secondary assessment to the public board.
3. Extension will produce the loss of separate school representatives from the public board.

We would remind the committee that the Planning and Implementation Commission has already advised against extension in some of these jurisdictions because of the likely loss of viability of public secondary schools.

We believe as well that extension by purchase of service may also affect the viability of public secondary schools and therefore should not be permitted without prior advice by the Planning and Implementation Commission. The process involves impact studies and representations by affected school boards.

We therefore recommend: Two options are available for this concern:

1. The new provision be explicitly limited to Haldimand-Norfolk Roman Catholic Separate School Board, leaving the broader issue to be resolved in future amendments;
2. Amend this section by adding the clause or clauses necessary to ensure that a decision to implement extension by purchase of service must be referred to the Planning and Implementation Commission for its advice to the minister.

With respect to section 3, the determination of school board composition, we have narrowed our concern to a single issue, that of time lines for determination of total board size and the distribution of trustees. We fully support the minister's intent to provide earlier dates for board decision-making on these matters. However, for the earlier dates to result in decisions that respect the public interest in fair representation, the time lines must be such that all necessary data are available to the school board before the date required for the adoption of resolutions.

We have now had the opportunity to review the time lines set out in Bill 12 and Bill 13 with officials of the Ministry of Education and therefore recommend that the deadline by which a school board may decide to increase or decrease the total number of trustee positions and designate areas as low population must be at least one month after all available data related to population are provided to the school board by the assessment commissioner.

**The Chair:** Thank you. The minister has asked to make a comment on the presentation, with the agreement of the committee.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** With respect to recommendation 1, we are certainly prepared and have included in our package to the members of the committee an option for an



amendment which would sunset this provision. The intention was always to have this regulation in effect only until the French Language Education Governance Advisory Group reported. We had the consultations that are necessary and came forward with the legislation that was necessary. So we have no objection to sunsetting that provision of the bill and have so indicated to both the opposition critics.

With respect to section 5, as I pointed out in the House I think the other day, the purchase-of-service provision that is allowed in section 4, it goes on to say that that is possible "only if," and the first one is that "the instruction is provided in a school operated by another board by means of an agreement referred to" and "after the first school year in which the election...is effective," the Roman Catholic school board has to file with the Planning and Implementation Commission a plan and that the Planning and Implementation Commission has to come forward with advice that indeed the interest of public education in Ontario is promoted by way of that negotiation. We believe that the legislation meets the need that is identified by OPSBA, and that was certainly our intention, to provide that PIC would be giving that information and that there would be no action on this unless that information was forthcoming.

With respect to the last recommendation, the time lines we set were set after negotiations which went on after 1988, where school boards asked us to come forward with dates that were earlier in order to allow for the candidates to prepare more appropriately for the election. Those dates were moved up in response to the consultation we had with the school boards at that time. If the school boards have changed their minds and now want a longer time line, that is not a big problem for us. We were trying to respond to the requests we had had from school boards; if that request is now withdrawn, it is not a major issue for us. I believe the date that was mentioned by OPSBA previously was 31 March. That is not a problem for us as a ministry, because our attempt was only to respond to previous requests from the school boards.

1620

**The Chair:** Any further representation by the deputation?

**Ms Moss:** I am Penny Moss, the executive director of OPSBA. If I could just comment on the last point, the school boards' position remains the same. As the ministry has indicated, an earlier date is preferred. What has happened by the selection of this date is that it is close enough to the release of the latest assessment data that it appears to be better to move the decision date beyond the receipt of the data date. When the submissions were first made in 1988 about concerns regarding these time lines, the boards were working on historical data. In other words, they are right this minute in December prepared to make decisions with data that has not been updated since the prior enumeration rolls. By moving to the assessment data, they can use more current data. That is where the apparent conflict in the request comes from.

**Mr J. Wilson:** I suppose my comments are directed more appropriately to the minister, but the witnesses may

want to comment also. If the minister is going to sunset the authority to establish French-language school boards by regulation after the establishment of the advisory board, then why—I really just need clarification on this—put that provision in the act in the first place? That is the first question.

The second one: If I hear you say you will not move ahead and establish French-language school boards until such time as the advisory board has reported, does that mean specifically that you will not move ahead with establishing a French-language board in Simcoe county until at least May when the advisory group has reported back?

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** No, that is not what we mean. What we have done is to establish the French Language Education Governance Advisory Group; that was established on 14 November. That group has been asked to report back to me by 15 May 1991, at which point that report would be made widely available throughout the province for consultation. It would outline the conditions under which school boards from that point on would be formed. It would offer different models and so on and different concerns.

The two exceptions to that are the two boards that had already indicated to the ministry and in fact were prepared to go to court in order to have their wishes enforced: the school boards in Prescott-Russell and in Simcoe. The reason we did not mention those two boards by name in this legislation is that it is not up to the ministry to come forward with that. We do not wish to create a school board unless the community comes forward and asks us to. That has not happened to this point, in an official sense.

The negotiations that are ongoing now, using members of the French Language Education Governance Advisory Group as assistants in that with the two boards, are working out the negotiation, which insists, of course, upon the protection of minority language rights in the case of Prescott-Russell, and which would look at all the issues that have been raised by the opposition as concerns around financing, around the viability of the other school board, the sharing of space and all that sort of thing.

Those two were excepted because they had indicated a willingness to go. They were reminding the government very strongly of the position that had been taken in 1988, that if they were ready to go they would not be prevented from doing so in 1991, that there would be an ability to form a school board, if those negotiations were successful, in the 1991 election year.

That is why those two boards alone were exempted from the rest of the process but were not mentioned in the legislation, because in fact both of them, one or more of them, may not come forward and be ready under this legislation. They may not be ready and they may come under the final advice of the committee.

**Mr J. Wilson:** I guess where I am a bit confused is that, as Prescott-Russell and Simcoe are exempt, as you have explained—you yourself mentioned and I would like the witnesses to also answer whether they are confident that, in the case of Simcoe county in particular, questions about financing, its effect on existing boards, its effect on local

ratepayers, its effect on space—if the French-language community from Simcoe county comes forward and asks for the establishment of the board in the immediate future, how do we ensure that all of the concerns of the community which I am hearing are addressed in such a short time span?

Second, along the same line, I would ask the witnesses whether they have any reason to be confident that these concerns will be addressed, given the current state of the bill before us.

**Mr Checkeris:** There are schools that are already in place and have been for a couple of years; in fact, there has been an extension to a secondary school. The simple matter would be to create the governance that will fit that particular situation. I think that is pretty straightforward. The request has been made, there has been a lot of discussion, so it would be quite simple. In the case of other boards in any other parts of the province, there has been no discussion at all. As a result, we do not know what kind of setup would be favourable to delivering French education to students of those areas.

**Mr J. Wilson:** How does the “numbers warrant” argument fit into this in the case of setting a precedent in Simcoe?

**Mr Checkeris:** I really do not know. As was mentioned previously, we have no ability to govern them one way or the other. The act is quite clear. Where there are sufficient numbers to do it, you have to do it.

**Ms Moss:** If I might add, to be fair, I heard the number 4% given. It may well be that the Metro Toronto French school board represents significantly less than 4% of the total students in the Metro public and I think is an example of finding flexibility in the description of models so that they can work for whatever the local circumstances.

One of the concerns to be worked out in Simcoe seems to us, from our members' perspective, to be the question of how, with the relatively small number, the governance interest of the francophone public trustees is reflected in whatever model emerges, because they are now, of course, on the Simcoe public board.

**Mrs McLeod:** First, can I say to the delegation that I appreciated the work that had gone into the initial submission which I think we all received last week, and furthermore, the work that was done to focus that more specifically with your recommendations today. Dare I say amalgamation does lead to efficiency? There is a long legacy allowing me to make that comment.

**Mr J. Wilson:** Not in Simcoe county, though. You have not visited our amalgamated municipalities yet.

**Mrs McLeod:** Anybody who was on a public school board for 17 years just has to make that comment once in their lifetime.

May I ask two specific questions? First, on your first recommendation. The minister has indicated that she would be considering a sunset clause which I think would address the recommendation you have made. Would you have in mind a time frame that you think would be appropriate for that type of sunset clause?

**Ms Moss:** We would like the school boards that will be ready in their communities for 1991 to be able to be established for the 1991 election. We would be less excited at any possibility that for the 1994 elections we are caught in the same bind, but our expectation, from what we understand at the moment, is that FLAG will provide probably the basis for legislation governing the creation of further boards in time for the next municipal election.

**Mrs McLeod:** The second question, then, is on extension by purchase of service. I had some very real concerns raised by the brief you submitted last week, recognizing some of the implications of the extension by purchase of service for northern boards, which are the ones primarily affected by this. I would like to ask for a little more clarification.

You have recognized in your options presented today that the Planning and Implementation Commission could play a significant role in addressing the concerns you have. Is there a need in your mind, even with the minister's comments today, for greater clarity in terms of the point in time at which the Planning and Implementation Commission becomes involved, those areas in which it can adjudicate, particularly in the short term, and whether there is still a concern about the first year, before perhaps the Planning and Implementation Commission can render advice?

1630

**Mr Checkeris:** The difficulty, I suppose, logistically speaking, is that the boards serving those children now are public school boards in small communities. If one begins to examine the purchase from those boards, secondary school level, the problem becomes one of viability of program. How do we provide the program for those students? All of these things would be taken, and PIC, as it has done in the past, has examined all of those situations. They have looked at what the people want and at the business of capital. Do you require more schools or fewer schools? Can we divide the school in half? What about the creation of a school board and all of the mechanism required to create a school board and whether all of that waters down what is delivered to the student?

We are concerned about it, because it seems to me, anyway, that many of the small communities are beginning to settle down with Bill 30 and are operating quite well at present. If we begin now with the creation of additional school boards—and that is exactly what will happen, and why not?—then the total educational program for those 16-odd municipalities could be in jeopardy. We are concerned about it. PIC should be the one, as an arm's-length group, to take a look at it and make recommendations, and we can act accordingly. We are not going to argue with that.

**Mrs Witmer:** Following along with PIC, I wonder if the Minister of Education could clarify. If PIC turns down an application for extension, are you able to override that decision at present?

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Certainly it would be very unwise for any of us to imagine that happening, simply because when PIC goes in, it listens to both sides. It has a specific obligation under the act to ensure the viability of public education; that



is a very specific responsibility it has. As I read it, no, I do not, because it says we can only do it if we have that recommendation from PIC.

**Mrs Witmer:** So you cannot override the decision of PIC?

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** As I read the section as it is written, it says that can only happen if PIC has met and made those recommendations and has filed an agreement reached within the community.

**Mrs Witmer:** Further to that, do you know how many of the boards have previously been turned down that have applied for extension?

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** I do not know the answer to that in terms of the entire province. In terms of the 16 boards that OPSBA has expressed specific concern about, my understanding was that none of them had requested an extension of this sort and that only Haldimand-Norfolk, which is the 17th board in this situation, had brought that forward. I stand to be corrected on that, but it was not my understanding that there had been a request for that.

**Ms Moss:** We could not tell you either; we have not done the background to find out what number. There are a couple at least—it is dangerous in public session—I believe Kirkland Lake is one, and that situation may be dealt with by another mechanism. It is true that Haldimand-Norfolk separate school board is the only one that extended by purchase of service without the legislative framework, so this fixes that. Because there was no legislation to support purchase-of-service agreements as the route for extension, I would think that none of the 16 boards ever requested it.

Our concern relates to at what point PIC looks at the situation. We are saying that because of the geography in the north and the fact that already PIC has rejected in a couple of cases, or a minimum of one, an extension because of viability of the public system, we need only to be satisfied that the first resolution of the board to extend by purchase also is reviewed by PIC, simply because it is the first step to the then provision, because what goes with it is the assessment and the loss of governance from the public system. If we could have cut and pasted the amendments into the existing act in the time we have had available, we may have been satisfied. We are prepared to look at that again to see whether the act can be read in such a way that our concern is satisfied. At the very minimum, we are looking simply for that, to ensure that the first decision to extend by purchase is subject to PIC scrutiny.

**The Chair:** I have Mr Owens, Mr Beer and Mr Wilson, and we have five minutes.

**Mr Owens:** In the brief that you had dropped into my office last week, on the bottom of page 3 there is a paragraph that states, "To enact this legislation would, we submit, be irresponsible and further promote the interests of separate school supporters at the real expense of those who have access to only one educational system." I wonder if you could clarify that for me, and also, the paragraph above talks about financial compensation. Could you give me some information as to what kind of compensation you would be looking for.

**Ms Moss:** In terms of the extension by purchase of certain—

**Mr Owens:** That is right.

**Ms Moss:** The situation in the 16 jurisdictions in the north, some of them with a single high school, is that if purchase of service is made possible through the public board the students will stay in the public high school where they are at the moment. The residential farm assessment of their families and of all separate school supporters in the jurisdiction whose assessment currently is only supporting elementary schools, on purchase of service will obviously go to the separate school board, and in exchange the public school board will lose its school representatives of the secondary separate ratepayers. So what you have is a situation where nothing changes for the education of the students concerned. The very significant changes take place in the funding. What then happens is that the separate board extended would purchase the service, if you like, on a per-pupil basis from the public board.

We have no impact studies. Other than the fact that PIC turned down extension by delivery of service in some cases, we do not know what the impact would be. We believe that the proposition that PIC review the purchase-of-service proposal first allows all parties to look clearly at the financial, the governance, the accountability and the provision of education issues before extension is finalized.

**The Chair:** I have Mr Beer and Mr Wilson, and we are very close on time.

**Mr Beer:** I will try to be quick, Madam Chair. It seems to me that in what you have said in the document you have given to us today in terms of the two options, the second one about this question of timing and the question of how the purchase of service would be dealt with under PIC, that is very clear. As I read the legislation, one would want the Planning and Implementation Commission, among other things, not to be recommending something of that sort unless all of the parameters of the problem had been met.

Just because I want to be very clear, because I think you have done an excellent job of narrowing and making very clear the precise point, is it at the present time, in your view then, the wording in the legislation? While it might mean what we have been discussing, if that somehow were made more specific or clearer, your particular concern is around what could be a purchase-of-service arrangement which would have the kinds of impacts that you have set out, and if we could find some way through that, that would make you feel warmer.

**Ms Moss:** Yes. I think that in order to be fair to the committee, historically we would likely have come and argued against extension by purchase of service—

**Mr Beer:** I appreciate that.

**Ms Moss:**—but we are sympathetic to the fact that Haldimand-Norfolk has done it, and what kind of structure can we have that can say it is okay for some and not for others? I think that on reflection we would argue for general fairness rather than specific total opposition.

**Mr J. Wilson:** I will be brief too. In your own brief you talk in the first paragraph about "where numbers warrant." When I ask you the question, you tell me that the Toronto board was created with less than 4%, so it is a fallacious argument of some sort. I would be interested to know what you mean by the last sentence in your own introduction to the brief, "where numbers warrant and where suitable local arrangements can be negotiated."

1640

Second, are you worried at all about the cost of this, given that your own board in Simcoe county is in my local papers almost weekly, either through a letter to the editor or last week we had a rash of editorials opposed to the extension of the French-language boards based on the cost argument?

I guess local ratepayers are frustrated that they do not seem to have much input into this, and second, by having gone through the experience last year of the \$12-million administrative centre being built and the half-empty buses going around the schools from the two boards that exist there now. I guess the vision in ratepayers' minds is that there are going to be additional cost, additional administration, new salaries of directors. The current one in your board is making in the range of up to \$114,000 a year. They are real concerns, though, and I hear them daily and I got them daily in the campaign.

So I would ask about the "where numbers warrant," whether that concerns you at all, and second, whether the costs do concern you in the Simcoe case because I believe the Simcoe board will go ahead shortly.

**Mr Checkeris:** If I may, of course the costs bother us, because the singular buck comes from the ratepayers and the government of Ontario. We are concerned about it, but the fact is that the law as it has been interpreted by the Supreme Court does not allow us that luxury to say so one way or the other. So the ratepayer may be unhappy, but the fact is that the law is on the side of the francophone at this time and we have to implement it. What we want to do is make sure that it is implemented in a fair and equitable way without disturbing the other students, if you like, from the other panel. That has to be done and I do not think it can be done in a hurry. I think that is the problem Bill 75 has suffered. It was done very quickly and as a result we have problems with it. That has to be changed.

#### ASSOCIATION FRANCO-ONTARIENNE DES CONSEILS D'ÉCOLES CATHOLIQUES DE L'ONTARIO

**The Chair:** I would call the next delegation. The time is now 4:40, almost 4:45, and 30 minutes is allotted for the presentation. I would ask that you identify yourself for the purposes of Hansard and begin your presentation. Bienvenue.

**Mr Martin:** I do not know if everybody else is, but I am having a real problem with the interpreters. The machine here is really distracting me from listening properly. It is humming and making noises. I do not know what we can do about that.

**The Chair:** We will see if the clerk can arrange a better transmitter for you.

**Mr Martin:** I have two here that do not work. I do not know about the rest of you.

**The Chair:** They all hum a little. They probably all have a little bit of a hum to them. I am informed that it depends where you are in the room as to how much it hums.

Welcome to the committee.

**M. Léger :** Je m'appelle Raymond Léger. Je suis membre de l'Association franco-ontarienne des conseils d'écoles catholiques de l'Ontario, association dont je suis le porte-parole aujourd'hui.

L'Association franco-ontarienne des conseils d'écoles catholiques de l'Ontario, dont le sigle est AFOCEC, fondée le 4 août 1988 et incorporée le 16 novembre 1988, représente 22 conseils d'écoles catholiques de l'Ontario, huit membres individuels et une population étudiante d'environ 30 500.

L'AFOCEC a pour but d'aider les conseillers, les administrateurs, le personnel enseignant et le personnel d'appui à bien gérer les écoles catholiques de langue française relevant de leur compétence afin d'assurer l'éducation intégrale de la population catholique de langue française et de faciliter la collaboration avec les organismes qui poursuivent des buts analogues.

L'AFOCEC remercie le comité permanent des affaires sociales de l'occasion qui lui est offerte de présenter ses réactions et de commenter les projets de loi 12 et 13.

Cependant, l'AFOCEC regrette de ne pas avoir eu plus de temps pour considérer ces changements, qui auront sans doute un impact sur la gestion de l'éducation catholique de langue française.

Tenant compte de sa mission spécifique, l'AFOCEC tient à réitérer devant ce comité que toute modification à la Loi sur l'éducation doit respecter les droits religieux acquis et ainsi permettre aux communautés qui le désirent la mise sur pied de conseils catholiques de langue française.

Le projet de loi 12 ne fait aucune mention du financement des nouvelles structures. Le financement est à la base de la majorité des difficultés vécues par les conseils scolaires francophones catholiques.

L'application de l'article 277o présente des problèmes insurmontables à la minorité linguistique dans la majorité des conseils des écoles séparées catholiques en Ontario. Les amendements à la Loi 12 n'apportent aucun éclaircissement sur cet article et de fait, ajouteront à la tension qui se vit présentement dans les conseils. Des modifications immédiates s'imposent afin d'assurer une qualité d'éducation égale pour les francophones et les anglophones.

Ce projet de loi est aussi silencieux sur l'augmentation du nombre de conseillers scolaires de trois à cinq dans les sections linguistiques et sur le mécanisme de règlement de conflits. L'AFOCEC recommande au comité de développement d'incorporer des amendements afin de répondre à ce besoin urgent.

Nous nous réjouissons de voir que le nombre de conseillers scolaires sera déterminé sur la population scolaire francophone catholique. Cependant, nous tenons à souligner que le résultat du recensement de 1988 ne doit servir à



aucun calcul à cause du grand nombre d'anomalies dans ce processus. L'AFOCEC réitère sa demande pressante de modifier les questions de l'avis du recensement et tout le processus.

L'AFOCEC ne peut trop insister sur la consultation avec les différents partis intéressés dans la mise en place de règlements pour appuyer ces nouvelles lois.

L'AFOCEC demande à tous les partis du gouvernement de l'Ontario d'appuyer ce nouveau texte de loi dans les plus brefs délais possibles afin de donner aux francophones le droit à la gestion et au contrôle de leur éducation, confirmé par l'article 23 de la Charte des droits et libertés et appuyé par le jugement unanime de la Cour suprême du Canada dans l'affaire Mahé.

**Mrs Cunningham:** You raised a couple of concerns, interestingly enough, that I had. I am going to ask you a process question now and that is, one of my great concerns was that if in fact school boards that have done their local negotiations have the rules laid down by regulation that they have all agreed to, they can be changed equally as quickly by regulation. But if in fact they are in a bill of the Legislative Assembly where the financing has been figured out and where the number of trustees has been decided on—not always the number of trustees but a proportionate arrangement, as has been done in the other two bills—that cannot be changed unless those same school boards, the partners, in fact agree to that and it is approved by the Legislative Assembly as a change, usually put forth by the minister. So if I had seen those kinds of arrangements, the financing—let's take Prescott-Russell for example—and the agreement around the number of trustees or the proportionate representation, I would have felt better. That was one of my great concerns.

Now, you are raising those two issues today, just two. I am sure you have others that you would like to have clarified, but you have underlined those, I think, as a priority. Could you tell us how you could advise the minister on those two issues today in a global manner and still have the divergency or the local community aspect board by board by board.

1650

**M. Léger :** Alors, madame la députée, je crois que vous voulez que je commente —

**Mrs Cunningham:** If I had paid more attention in high school, I would probably be able to do this much better. But I did not. Now I am suffering rather significantly, but my children do much better than I. I apologize.

**M. Léger :** Alors, je crois que vous voulez que je commente sur le financement et sur le recensement. Ce sont bien là vos deux questions ?

**Mrs Cunningham:** Yes.

**M. Léger :** Très bien. Je dois encore souligner le fait que notre association a reçu les deux projets de loi dans les quelques jours qui ont précédés cette présentation et qu'il y a dû y avoir conférence téléphonique afin de préparer la présentation de notre association.

Personnellement, je n'ai reçu les projets de loi qu'à 13 heures aujourd'hui même. Alors, je me sens dans une situation un peu délicate pour répondre à vos questions.

Cependant, pour le financement, je dois vous assurer que nous disons que le financement, c'est vraiment le nerf de la guerre et c'est un problème présentement au sein des systèmes d'écoles séparées catholiques. Le financement n'est pas équitable et il faudrait vraiment que le gouvernement se penche sur cette question-là afin d'assurer la parité, afin d'assurer la qualité de l'éducation de la minorité de langue française.

Quant au recensement, il y a de sérieux problèmes, premièrement, dans les questions que l'on pose, et je serais d'avis qu'il faudrait un bon entraînement pour ceux qui s'occupent du recensement afin que les personnes qui font ce travail connaissent bien l'enjeu de leur travail.

Il y a aussi le processus complet. Je dois vous dire que moi-même, comme contribuable, comme éducateur de plus de 36 ans de métier, j'ai bien rempli mes formulaires pour trois circonscriptions scolaires. Dans deux circonscriptions scolaires, j'étais placé comme contribuable francophone ; cependant, dans la circonscription où je demeure présentement, la circonscription de Durham, on m'a placé comme contribuable anglophone. Alors, j'ai dû me rendre à l'hôtel de ville de moi-même pour essayer de faire faire le changement avant les élections. Alors, il y a tout le processus qui est à revoir et il y a les questions du recensement qu'on doit vraiment revoir de même.

Je crois que dans le passé, les associations francophones ont fait des recommandations. Il s'agirait peut-être de reprendre ces recommandations-là, et d'une consultation avec les associations pour mettre à jour ces nouvelles questions à poser sur le recensement.

**Mrs Cunningham:** You have been most helpful in procedure. I think you have given us something that we should be looking at there. I know we had trouble in 1988, because I was on a school board with everybody getting enumerated. Having said that, we are all suffering significantly. It went on for about a year after the election, trying to figure out who was paying taxes to what school board. Things are not good in Ontario, but you are very much concerned about this issue and I am too.

With regard to the dollars, you and I do not have an answer today, but boy, if we did, we would sure charge them for our good advice, would we not? That is the crux. It was certainly mentioned by the first association this afternoon too. I thank you for attempting to respond today, especially given the short time frame.

**The Vice-Chair:** I call on the minister. I think she has a comment.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** I just wanted to assure the delegate that in fact we have similar concerns. The comment you made about needing to go back and get advice and to consult widely about how this could really work better is well taken. I certainly agree with you that the way in which the enumeration is done is not appropriate, and that is something we will be looking at. Unfortunately, it is going to be too late for the 1991 election. The only concern we have in this current bill was to make sure that those communities that were ready did not have to continue to wait, but we really recognize that before 1994 something very significant has to happen to address exactly

the issues that you have raised with respect to the enumeration.

**Mr Martin:** I understood you to say at the end of your presentation that the biggest issue in all this is certainly that we get on with allowing the French community to govern its own French education, the delivery of education to its children. It seems to me, as it was with the extension of full funding to the Catholic school system, that no matter when it was decided to do it, there would certainly be resistance and objection and a demand for more consultation. So whether we decide to do it today or next week or a month down the road, we would always get that same reaction.

We decided, in putting this bill forth, that in order to accommodate those boards that are ready to go for this coming election year, to go ahead with this, but we also put in place what we thought were some pretty fair processes regarding what this will look like when it arrives in a community. In that was provision certainly for all of the stakeholders to participate. It seems to me that the result of similar process regarding the extension of Catholic school boards, for the most part, has been relatively successful.

Is it your feeling, having said so strongly at the end that the big question was that we get on with allowing the French community to decide its own fate regarding how it delivers French education in co-operation with its English partners, that that is the important thing and that we can, through the process we have in place, in fact work out the details?

**M. Léger :** Notre association appuie entièrement les projets de loi 12 et 13. Nous demandons cependant certains amendements dans la mesure du possible afin d'assurer une véritable gestion de la minorité francophone au sein des conseils scolaires de langue française. Alors, nous appuyons ces projets.

Nous avons soulevé certaines faiblesses et nous demandons s'il y a possibilité d'avoir des amendements afin que ces faiblesses-là puissent être remédiées dans la mesure du possible. Mais je comprends les contraintes de temps et de la consultation. Je suis certainement conscient du fait que les élections de 1991 arrivent très rapidement. Alors, nous ne voudrions pas nuire d'aucune façon aux communautés francophones qui sont prêtes à agir présentement.

**Mr J. Wilson:** I think you just mentioned that you have certain amendments. We only got the bill this afternoon, but I am unclear at this time as to what those amendments would be, to tell you the truth.

**M. Léger :** Alors, les amendements auxquels nous touchons — et je dois dire que nous avons touché uniquement aux dispositions des projets de loi 12 et 13 qui touchent de plus près l'éducation de langue française — sont le recensement, le financement, le nombre de conseillers dans les sections de langue minoritaire et le mécanisme de résolution de conflits.

**The Vice-Chair:** I would like to thank you for being here today and making your presentation. Merci beaucoup.

1700

#### ONTARIO SEPARATE SCHOOL TRUSTEES' ASSOCIATION

**The Vice-Chair:** Next on our list we have the Ontario Separate School Trustees' Association, Betty Moseley-Williams, the president. I call on that group to come forward. For the purposes of Hansard, I would ask that you identify the other members of your group.

**Mrs Moseley-Williams:** I would like to thank you for the opportunity for us to come and give some opinions on Bill 12. We appreciate the fact that you are going to listen to some of our concerns. On my left is Mary Hendriks. She is a trustee with the Lincoln County Roman Catholic Separate School Board and the vice-president of the Ontario Separate School Trustees' Association. Caroline DiGiovanni is on my right. Caroline is the research director for our office. Peter Lawers is a solicitor. He acts as the solicitor for OSSTA and has helped us with this. I am Betty Moseley-Williams. I am a trustee with the Nipissing District Roman Catholic Separate School Board and the president of OSSTA.

**The Vice-Chair:** Before you begin, I am going to point out that you do have half an hour. However way you wish to conduct your business, we also allow for questions. I ask that you allow members of the committee to ask questions, and in that short half-hour period try to get those questions in.

**Mrs Moseley-Williams:** I always read the way I read at church; it is a race between me and the other fellow.

The Ontario Separate School Trustees' Association is made up of 54 school boards, and 38 of our boards are operating under Bill 75 and have minority-language sections. Of these boards, 31 have French-language minority sections and seven have English-language minority sections. As of September 1989 there were approximately 98,000 francophone pupils educated in publicly funded schools and, of those, 82% are educated by the separate school board.

Into the bill. Our association supports the policy initiatives behind Bill 12 in a large measure, but we have some fundamental points of disagreement. I am going to go to page 2. We are going to address each of those that we are concerned with, and Mary will read this.

**Mrs Hendriks:** Regarding the issue of umbrella school boards, OSSTA has often voiced its implacable and utter opposition to umbrella school boards. The concept of umbrella school boards composed of Roman Catholic and public school components is based on the assumption that separate school boards are just like public school boards except that they teach Roman Catholicism for a couple of hours each week. This assumption amounts to a complete misunderstanding of the nature of Catholic education and of the level of autonomy required by separate school boards if they are to continue to provide such education to their students. We believe that umbrella school boards would lead to the demise of the separate school system in Ontario and that such boards are accordingly contrary to subsection 93(1) of the Constitution Act, 1867.



We do not intend to use this opportunity to debate umbrella boards yet again. We leave with you a copy of a booklet published by the Completion Office Separate Schools entitled *Catholic Education and Separate School Boards in Ontario*. Once you read the booklet, you will see why umbrella boards will not work.

The concept of umbrella boards is implicit in section 2 of Bill 12. It permits the establishment by regulation of a French-language school board having "more than one component." We understand this to mean a public school component and a Roman Catholic component, as provided by Bill 109 of the Ottawa-Carleton French-Language School Board. OSSTA opposed Bill 109 and said that the concept was unworkable. We believe that the passage of time has borne out our prediction. OSSTA opposes the creation of new umbrella school boards in any form.

**Mrs Moseley-Williams:** In the matter of French-language school boards, and subject to the qualifications that were listed above, the Ontario Separate School Trustees' Association supports the creation of Catholic and public French-language school boards in the province of Ontario where numbers warrant. We also support the appointment of the French Language Education Governance Advisory Group and its mandate. We believe that the advisory group should be permitted to carry out its work and to make recommendations before legislation is enacted concerning French-language school boards. While it would have been preferable to have had such legislation in place prior to the creation of new French-language school boards in Ontario, we recognize the need for the government to move swiftly in certain localities, so we recommend that subsections 11a, 11b and 11c of section 10 of the Education Act be repealed upon the enactment of legislation concerning French-language school boards.

We believe that extensive consultation is required before the enactment of a regulation designed to create a French-language school board. Both affected language groups—and they will affect the whole board—their trustees and their communities must be consulted if the process is to work smoothly from an educational perspective and from the perspective of the affected communities. In this respect, we urge the government to learn from the experience of Bill 109.

**Mrs Hendriks:** Regarding the amendments to Bill 30, we support sections 5 to 9 of Bill 12, amending certain sections of Bill 30, which implemented the extension of full funding to Catholic secondary schools. We believe that it is the right of our children to receive a Catholic education at the secondary school level regardless of the location of their residences in Ontario, and these amendments assist in implementing that right.

Section 136l, as amended by Bill 12, would continue to leave the mechanics of the teacher designation system to the regulation. That regulation, 71/87, in its present form is fundamentally defective and probably exceeds the authority given by subsection 136l(1) for its enactment. The regulation assumes that all growth in enrolment at Roman Catholic separate school boards is matched by an

equal decline in enrolment at the coterminous public board. Needless to say, this is not always true.

Particular problems have been caused in Lakehead and in Metropolitan Toronto. In both places the separate boards have been obliged to hire designated teachers even where the public boards were hiring new teachers.

We therefore recommend that regulation 71/87 concerning the designation of teachers be revisited and amended as necessary so that it applies only where the decline in the enrolment of the local public board is truly consequent upon the election of the Roman Catholic school board to perform the duties of a secondary school board as required by subsection 136l(1) of the Education Act.

Regarding the vacancies on school boards, OSSTA supports the policy behind sections 10 to 13 of Bill 12, which rationalizes and improves the various provisions of the Education Act concerning the filling of vacancies on a school board.

**Mrs Moseley-Williams:** We support the amendments to Bill 125 and Bill 75 proposed in sections 14 to 21, subject to the following qualifications.

We were greatly disappointed to find there is no amendment to rules 12 and 13 of subsection 206a(8) of the Education Act. Those rules provide that the minimum number of minority language trustees on a school board be three.

The consultation document on minority-language governance initiatives issued by the previous Minister of Education had proposed raising the minimum number of minority-language trustees from three to five. This change received the approval of the Ontario Separate School Trustees' Association as well as l'Association franco-ontarienne de conseils d'écoles catholiques and l'Association française des conseils scolaires de l'Ontario. We do not understand why this change has not been implemented in Bill 12. There are minority-language sections representing both language groups that will be detrimentally affected by this omission. It is going to affect some of the boards so badly, and the boards that are operating in the French-language sections have been telling us, "You need more than three trustees to run a school board." We support that very strongly.

Further, in the north of Ontario, English minority-language groups will be particularly hurt by this omission. Because of the changes made to Bill 125, the number of English-language trustees in some boards could be reduced from five or more to three. Immediately following the 1991 elections, it can be expected that some of these trustees will have to begin negotiating the division of assets of existing boards, leading to the creation of French-language school boards. Apart from the difficulty of running a board section with only three trustees, the additional burden of negotiating the split of the board would be intolerable. We expect that this sequence of events will persuade the affected English minority-language sections that the government is biased against them in the creation of French-language school boards, thus prejudicing the entire effort.

OSSTA recommends that rules 12 and 13 of subsection 206a(8) of the Education Act be amended by Bill 12 to

increase the minimum number of members of the minority-language section of a school board from three to five.

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We recognize that some public school boards having particularly small groups of French-language pupils may feel that the increase in the number of trustees cannot be justified. It must be recognized that French-language governance and the creation of French-language school boards is largely a matter of concern to the separate school community, which educates such a large number of franco-phone students. For the purpose of implementing this proposal, we would be prepared to accept an amendment which would apply only to the separate school boards.

Second, OSSTA is disappointed that Bill 12 fails to implement another proposal in the consultation document concerning the resolution of disputes. We believe that a dispute resolution mechanism is essential to Bill 75 if it is to operate successfully in Ontario. The proposal for a dispute resolution mechanism we put forward was supported by both the Association française des conseils scolaires de l'Ontario and the Association franco-ontarienne des conseils d'écoles catholiques. We recommend that a dispute resolution mechanism for resolving disputes between the sections of school boards be added to Bill 12.

Those are some of our concerns. We would be very pleased to answer questions if we can.

**Mrs Cunningham:** Just a couple of questions basically, because I cannot remember. Was there a dispute resolution mechanism in the Ottawa-Carleton agreement?

**Mr Lawers:** There was one for dealing with disputes about the division of assets, but there is not a permanent facility for dealing with disputes that may arise between the sections on other issues.

**Mrs Cunningham:** So it was just the division of assets.

**Mr Lawers:** That is correct.

**Mrs Cunningham:** Given the discussions that went on with the Ottawa-Carleton—and I use that one because it is one that was passed when I was a member here so I did watch some of the discussions around it—you are talking here about the recommendation for the number being five, and I am aware of the recommendation of the committee. But in the Ottawa-Carleton situation again, because I know you were involved, did they make the recommendation ahead of time for the representation?

**Mr Lawers:** It is not an issue that affected Ottawa-Carleton, because on both those school boards there were more than three French-language trustees. In fact, I believe on the Ottawa board they were eight and eight. I do not remember what Carleton was, but it was pretty close to even in terms of representation.

**Mrs Cunningham:** So it was equal representation to start with.

**Mr Lawers:** Yes, those boards were very close to even in strength between French and English. That is unusual, certainly for southern Ontario. Northern Ontario is a little different.

**Mrs Cunningham:** It was something that just happened because they were happy with the representation to start with.

**Mr Lawers:** I am not sure what you are referring to as having happened, though.

**Mrs Cunningham:** I am not sure whether the number is part of the legislation.

**Mrs Moseley-Williams:** In Ottawa-Carleton three to five was not an issue. Where the three to five is going to be an issue, I think, in the English-language boards are all the northern boards. It is certainly not in the south, as far as I can determine. That would be for English-language trustees. Timmins is a large northern board, fairly sprawling, and it would automatically go from five to three for the English section. There may well be a wish to form a French-language school board there, so what we are saying is to try and run that school board and do this other negotiating—well, I think to have a school board with the numbers of pupils that you have now with a full board and then you are going to go to three trustees next year is not going to be conducive to very good board relationships. I think right down the Highway 11 corridor is where you will see it.

**Mr Beer:** Just a couple of points. I just want to follow up on your last comment. Frankly, I may have misunderstood, but I do not see the change to the representation on the existing school boards unless there is a move where one is creating a French-language and an English-language board. You were saying that in Timmins, for example—

**Mrs Moseley-Williams:** The minority section is English, yes.

**Mr Beer:** Right. How is that going to change? Are you saying because of the fact that it is under double majority now as set out by the courts?

**Mrs Moseley-Williams:** Because in the next election the representation will be by the student population, and it will decrease.

**Mr Beer:** So the point here is that if there is a move to create another board, those people are running the minority-language section as well as trying to negotiate some change in the situation.

**Mr Lawers:** It is the concept of the double whammy. First you are five and then you get reduced to three because of your pupil population, and then you get thrown into having to negotiate the split-up of your board. That will be seen by people in that situation as being a two-step dance that is very unhelpful and much resisted.

**Mr Beer:** I appreciate the distinction. It seems to me that one of the things we need to recognize with what is happening here is that the ministry has set up a commission to look at how French-language school boards might be established in various parts of the province where numbers warrant. We also have an existing piece of legislation which in a sense created a kind of mini-board within a board, and we know some of the tensions that has created over time, even with the best will in the world. These changes still leave us, if you like, in a transition period.



I think the point you make is a very good one, that most of the minority-language sections are within separate school boards.

Clearly, as we go forward here, we may over the course of this decade find that we have a number of French-language school boards, but there will quite probably continue to be a number of areas where you will still have a minority-language section within the separate school board. I guess what we have to find is a way that will allow us to achieve both in an effective way, financially as well as meeting the rights under the charter and the rights set out under the Education Act.

The point about the numbers is one that I know we have discussed for some time, and whether it should be three or five. One of the concerns was the size of the board, but the other was: Can you run today in effect a minority-language section with only three people, given the various issues that have to be addressed and the kind of planning and so on that goes on?

I want to be clear, though, that you would like to see these further changes to that part of the bill but you support what is in Bill 12. You would like to see other things, but as far as the changes that are there are concerned, those are acceptable, perhaps your most important point being the concerns around the minority-language sections after the change in the trustee distribution for the next election.

**Mrs Moseley-Williams:** I think we have said in our documents over the last couple of years, with respect to the number of trustees, that if a board is going to run effectively and respect the two sections of that board the trustees have to start with some kind of fairness where they can handle the business of that section. Though we are bringing it forward at this time and we are speaking to those English-minority sections because we are concerned with them, we have also stated in our papers and have recognized the fact that the French-language sections in the boards that we know of and are familiar with have some difficulty in covering the necessary work that has to be done. They have an unfair load in many areas.

Although at this time we are bringing forward our concerns mainly specifically to this bill, and we are talking about the English minority, that has been a statement we have made about the French-language sections for a few years. They are in our boards and we know that sometimes there is not a fair workload.

**The Vice-Chair:** I have a comment by the minister, if you will permit.

1720

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Just very briefly, we really felt that doing the increase in the numbers would pre-empt the work of FLAG. When the consultations were done on Bill 75, there was by no means consensus around that increase, as you are well aware. It was thought that because we are primarily wanting to meet very specific and very limited needs with this particular amendment, it was in all of our best interests to leave that until a time when we have full consultation and have the benefit of the advice of the advisory group.

On the second issue around the dispute resolution mechanism, we see the Languages of Instruction Commission of Ontario as the dispute mechanism, as it was under Bill 75. Once the governance advisory group does report, it may well be that one of the changes we want to contemplate in a very real sense in a larger context might be a dispute resolution mechanism. But at this time we were not trying to pre-empt the work of the advisory group and felt that was part of what would be implied by something like that.

**Mr Lawers:** The only problem with that response is that although I understand you are not trying to pre-empt the work of the advisory group, and we would not want to do that either, the fact is that you may actually be prejudicing the chances of success in the outcome, because you are going to be getting people and whipsawing them into a three and then forcing them through the sausage machine which the French-language advisory group may design. In my view, having been through this a bit, that will make it very difficult for those English-language sections, and where the French-language sections are similarly affected, to deal adequately with the new burdens the advisory group will place on them.

That is why we are suggesting that it is just a matter of timing. That is all it really is. It is because the reduction will follow almost immediately, we expect, but be followed almost immediately by the new regime to be suggested by the advisory group. That will seem like a double whammy to those affected most directly by it.

**The Vice-Chair:** Can I just point out that we have 10 minutes left and there are two more questioners. Mr Wilson is on my list and Mr Martin.

**Mr J. Wilson:** Just so you know where I am coming from on my questions, basically I went through the separate school system. I am Catholic. My mother is a religious consultant, actually, with the Simcoe county board.

I understand the need to keep the Catholic ethos as it is in all aspects of school life, but do you not think in this case that perhaps the umbrella board—I have not had time to read the document—is a way of keeping costs down and keeping down the duplication of services? I keep harping on costs because I keep hearing it from the people on the street.

Second, I would be interested to know about section 2, where you say you support the creation of Catholic and public French-language school boards in the province where numbers warrant. I would be curious, as I am with all presenters, to know what they mean by that, because I am not sure I know what we mean by that. I am not sure that the Supreme Court left it sufficiently open-ended, as I understand it, that we should come to some consensus on that.

The explanation of point 2 in your brief says you understand the need for the government to move swiftly in certain localities. I would assume that means Prescott-Russell and my area of Simcoe county. I am trying to get a better understanding of the need. Perhaps you could clarify that,

the need to move swiftly, not necessarily the need to have a board.

**Mr Lawers:** On the first issue you addressed, if I got it down right, the first question had to do with keeping the costs down and the assumption that an umbrella board actually does that. I wonder whether in fact the experience in Bill 109 has borne out that such a model actually keeps costs down. I expect if you investigate that model you will discover it has done exactly the opposite. What you have is a central unit at the top that has nothing to do, by and large, and yet is maintained with staff and personnel, premises and all that sort of stuff. I do not know that, but that is something to suggest.

If you are looking at keeping costs down without damaging the need to maintain the Catholic ethos of the system, maybe something to look at would be larger units within the system itself rather than umbrella boards. I suspect that umbrella boards, you will discover, are a sinkhole for money as opposed to the other. That is a suggestion that might be worth looking at.

In terms of the "where numbers warrant" question, clearly the Mahé case establishes a very low threshold. We have not picked one in our minds, but there are a few cases in Ontario where, as Mr Beer says, Bill 75 will have to continue to be the model for all time because there are so few either English-language or French-language students, but that would probably be relatively rare. It really depends on what francophones and anglophones want, wherever they happen to be. The "numbers warrant" question is a real question, but it is a very low threshold according to Mahé. I think I nailed it. What else have you got?

**Mr J. Wilson:** I assume the last sentence in that section deals with the need to move swiftly on Prescott-Russell and Simcoe, my bias of course being Simcoe. What is the real need there other than to respond—I know at some point you have to give a response to the Supreme Court. It seems to me there are different ways of doing that than creating school boards. It did tie into the "numbers warrant" question, really. You have a blanket statement here. What do you mean by it?

**Mr Lawers:** As I understand the situation in Prescott-Russell particularly, that separate board is close to being ready to go, and if it is, there is no particular reason why we would suggest that the process be held up for this sort of larger global picture. Just how close they are is really the question.

**Mr Martin:** Let me say, first, how much I appreciate the fact that you are here today and making a presentation on behalf of the organization you represent. It seems to me, from conversations I have had with you in the past, that you are retreading information you have been running by the ministry for a couple of years. A lot of it revolves around the setting up of French-language school boards and how that will affect you and minority sections and this kind of thing.

As I said to the presenters before, it seems to me that as you—in my past life—were so anxious for the Catholic community to get control of governance and then full

extension of the right to educate its children, you must understand what the French population is after in terms of having control over what its schools will look like. With that in mind, does it not make more sense that we move ahead and get this thing done as quickly as possible with as much consultation as we can through the FLAG process before we are forced to do a whole lot of things we do not want to do because of court cases that will come at us and limit the options available to do some of the things you are suggesting here? That is the first question. That may not be a good question to ask because of your profession; you may have a different slant on it. Anyway, I just wanted to ask that question.

The second point I would like to make is in terms of the umbrella board. Certainly in allowing the Catholic community to govern its own boards, we allow you to make decisions for the most part on how you will operate. It seems to me that we should also allow the French population to do pretty much the same thing, to let it decide how it wants to see the governance of its system set up, whether it would be an umbrella board or some options we have not even thought of yet. I am not sure.

Again, by saying that we are not going to do umbrella boards I think would say to the French population, "You can do this, but only within these limitations." I think the French population in this province is telling us it is sick and tired of that and what it wants now are directions that say, "Go ahead and set up school boards, but do them in consultation with the other stakeholders and come back to us, and then we will look at some legislation."

1730

**Mr Lawers:** On the first question you raised, I hope you have not got the wrong impression from this presentation. Our position is full speed ahead on Bill 12. We are not suggesting that you delay it in some way. We have made a couple of suggestions for improvements in it which we hope you will see your way clear to make, but at the same time our position quite clearly is full speed ahead on Bill 12.

On the second point, the umbrella board, really, at the end of the day perhaps we are going to have to agree to disagree on umbrella boards. Certainly it will be interesting to see what kinds of scenarios FLAG comes up with, and we will have to look at those when they come forward. But from a constitutional law viewpoint there is no real distinction between French and English for purposes of section 93 of the Constitution Act, which is where separate school supporters get their rights. That was made clear in the Mahé case in the Supreme Court of Canada. So you know what our position on umbrella school boards is. You will have to read the brief to understand why that is. At some point in the future I guess we will rejoin the debate on the issue, but this is not the time, I do not think. I think we would all be very curious to see what FLAG comes up with, and we would certainly like to participate in its deliberations.

**Mrs Moseley-Williams:** I would just like to go further on this, that we will be speaking to FLAG. I would not explain it as well as Peter does about umbrella boards.



but the trustees in our association feel that any presentation of an umbrella board within a Catholic school system we would dispute. It is that clear. We think that the rights of Catholic schools are constitutional and therefore the collective Catholic school rights of the province. So we would dispute it.

**The Vice-Chair:** One final question, and very briefly, please.

**Mr J. Wilson:** Please do not take it the wrong way. You represent trustees. I wonder how much consultation has gone on with ratepayers, given that your trustees are accountable to ratepayers. Have you had time, in all honesty, to consult very widely on this particular bill?

**Mrs Moseley-Williams:** You mean Bill 12? We only got it two days ago.

**Mr J. Wilson:** That is the point. I suggest you talk to the ratepayers in Simcoe that I had at my door all weekend.

**Mr Owens:** I thought it was going to be a brief question.

**The Vice-Chair:** I am trying to show patience. I will allow you to complete your question.

**Mr J. Wilson:** Whether you allow me or not I will complete it, anyway. That would be my suggestion. If you have only had a couple of days, I think it fits into our point that this bill requires a great deal more study. That is all I have to say.

**Mrs Moseley-Williams:** If I may, it will be very brief. We consult as much as we can within our community, with parents' groups and trustee groups and teacher groups and any group connected with Catholic education. Our documents that have come forward show that kind of consultation, and it is usually indicated that they are all involved. When we have made statements about umbrella boards, that is something that has been consulted, has been talked to, talked at and talked of ad nauseam. All the consultation we have ever had has been on that question.

In the matter of the bills on which we try to bring a brief to the government, we are acting for the boards we represent, and sometimes the consultation is limited to the boards we represent. When we are bringing you a major document, you can be sure that all of our community will be represented in it.

**The Vice-Chair:** I do want to proceed with our next presenters, unless members of the committee want to carry on further. I will abide by your wishes.

**Mr Hope:** Just one short question.

**The Vice-Chair:** One final, final question.

**Mr Hope:** It is the point about the length of time, that you just got the bill and were not able to consult the taxpayers. This is something that is not new, that has just been developed since this new government. There has been consultation on this whole part from the previous government. I have talked to communities about this, and I am sure the taxpayers are well aware of the issue that may be here surrounding the cost. So it is not something new that is introduced with this bill we bring forward but something that has been out in the community for some time, and

people do know the costs that will be involved in these new boards.

**The Vice-Chair:** I will allow you one final comment on that point if you wish.

**Mrs Moseley-Williams:** No. I would just like to thank you for the opportunity of being here. You can be sure that we do support that you go forward. We would like you to look at our concerns, and I know you will be hearing from us again.

**The Vice-Chair:** I would like to thank you for making your presentation today, and to all of you, a very good brief. It actually was very interesting because it inspired a few more questions than we thought at first, so thank you very much.

#### ASSOCIATION DES ENSEIGNANTES ET DES ENSEIGNANTS FRANCO-ONTARIENS

**The Vice-Chair:** I would like to call at this time our next group of presenters, the Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens and Robert Millaire.

Would you also like to note who is with you today for purposes of Hansard. Before you start, I would just note that we will be going till 6:05 to allow you your full half-hour.

**M. Millaire :** Merci. J'aimerais présenter Raymond Vaillancourt. M. Vaillancourt est adjoint administratif à l'association ; Raymond Vaillancourt a été très engagé dans le parachèvement lorsque la Loi 30 a été mise sur pied pour assurer la protection des enseignantes et des enseignants dans les transferts.

Alors, l'Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens est heureuse d'avoir l'occasion de rencontrer les membres du comité permanent des affaires sociales afin de commenter les projets de loi 12 et 13.

L'AEFO est une filiale de la Fédération des enseignantes et des enseignants de l'Ontario. Elle compte 6 400 membres qui oeuvrent dans les classes, les modules et les écoles de langue française de toute la province. L'AEFO représente les enseignants et les enseignantes de l'élémentaire et du secondaire des côtés public et catholique francophones.

L'intérêt de l'AEFO pour les dossiers francophones est bien connu. L'un des objectifs de la Charte d'incorporation est de promouvoir l'éducation en langue française. C'est parce que nous respectons cet objectif que nous nous présentons devant vous aujourd'hui.

L'AEFO, dans ses intérêts pour la francophonie, a toujours fait la promotion de toute la gamme — ce n'est pas dans votre document — des écoles, de l'éducation en langue française du jardin d'enfants jusqu'à la fin des études postsecondaires. L'AEFO, lorsqu'elle a fait sa présentation devant le comité sur l'assimilation, a justement réitéré l'importance d'avoir cette pleine gamme d'éducation en langue française.

Le rapport de Stacy Churchill, qui date déjà de quelques années, indiquait également la même chose, soit ce besoin de la pleine gamme d'éducation. Pour nous à l'AEFO, la qualité de l'éducation va de pair avec la gestion de nos écoles de langue française. Nous avons été très actifs dans les conseils scolaires d'Ottawa-Carleton et

également celui de Toronto : l'établissement des deux premiers conseils scolaires de langue française en province.

La Cour d'appel de l'Ontario en 1984 a statué que l'article 23 de la Charte des droits et libertés accordait partout dans la province le droit aux francophones de gérer leurs propres institutions. Pour respecter ce jugement, l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario adoptait des lois créant des conseils scolaires de langue française à Toronto et à Ottawa. Ça a été perçu par la population francophone en général comme un pas très positif et un début de réponse aux besoins des francophones. De plus, l'Assemblée approuvait en 1986 le projet de loi 75, qui créait dans les autres conseils scolaires où il y avait des classes, modules ou écoles de langue française des sections de langue française.

Devant les jugements des divers cours, la Loi 75 devenait, à notre avis, une étape temporaire avant la pleine gestion par les francophones de leurs institutions.

En examinant ce jugement de la Cour d'appel de l'Alberta, la Cour suprême du Canada confirmait le jugement de 1984 de la Cour d'appel de l'Ontario tout en lui ajoutant certaines précisions. Le droit de la gestion des francophones a été non seulement maintenu mais renforcé par ces divers cours.

À notre avis, les projets de loi 12 et 13 modifient la Loi sur l'éducation de façon à rencontrer les exigences de la décision de la Cour suprême du Canada. De plus, ils rendront la mise en oeuvre de ces décisions plus facile.

Je reconnais la part importante du Parti libéral — et je cite hors du texte ici — qui était au pouvoir récemment, dans la création des premiers conseils scolaires de langue française d'Ottawa-Carleton et de Toronto. Je félicite également ce parti pour les démarches qu'il avait entreprises à Prescott et Russell. L'AEFO est très heureuse du suivi à Prescott et Russell et à Simcoe et des initiatives entreprises par le Nouveau Parti démocratique vis-à-vis des dossiers de la gestion, et tout particulièrement vis-à-vis des deux projets de loi devant nous aujourd'hui, les projets de loi 12 et 13.

À notre avis, les projets de loi 12 et 13 modifient la Loi sur l'éducation de façon à satisfaire aux exigences de la décision de la Cour suprême, comme je l'ai mentionné tantôt.

Nous appuyons les modifications à l'article 2 du projet de loi 12. Plusieurs communautés francophones veulent la mise en place immédiate de conseils scolaires de langue française, d'autres sont à étudier les modalités d'une telle mise en oeuvre. L'établissement de conseils scolaires se fera donc graduellement en respectant le rythme de développement des communautés. Cet amendement permet donc de créer les conseils scolaires de langue française à un moment approprié sans avoir, à chaque cas, à créer une loi spéciale.

Il est important de prendre cette route afin d'éviter dans le futur des débats émotionnels devant l'Assemblée législative. La flexibilité proposée dans le projet de loi 12 éviterait ces situations de crise — nous vivons encore les effets de la dernière — en rendant beaucoup plus fluide le processus. Le comité consultatif qui circule présentement

en province sur la gestion sera certainement un atout important à la création de ces futurs conseils.

1740

L'article 23 de la Charte des droits et libertés date de 1982. Le premier jugement d'interprétation en cette matière date de 1984. Nous croyons que la période d'attente a été assez longue et justifie les mesures prises par ces amendements. J'espère que tous les partis appuieront justement ces deux projets de loi.

Alors, quant à moi, il faut passer immédiatement à l'action et je réitère que ça fait longtemps que les communautés francophones attendent que ceci soit mis en place.

Puisque cet amendement ne touche, par son libellé, que la création de conseils scolaires de langue française, il serait faux de prétendre que cela donne au conseil exécutif le pouvoir de faire ou de défaire des conseils scolaires de langue anglaise. Plus tard, lorsque les conseils scolaires de langue française auront été créés et mis en place, il sera toujours temps de remettre ces pouvoirs à l'Assemblée législative.

L'AEFO ne s'opposerait pas à une disposition législative, à une «sunset clause» qui retournerait à l'Assemblée législative le contrôle sur la création de futurs conseils scolaires de langue française. L'échéancier, par contre, d'ici à ce temps, devrait être raisonnable et acceptable à la communauté francophone.

L'AEFO appuie les amendements aux paragraphes 14(3) et 14(4) du projet de loi 12. La Cour suprême a statué que le nombre de conseillers scolaires représentant la minorité linguistique devrait être proportionnel au nombre d'enfants de la minorité linguistique relevant de ce conseil.

C'est à notre avis la façon la plus juste de définir le nombre de conseillers scolaires de chacun des articles. Cela rétablira l'équilibre dans les conseils qui ont été désavantagés par la Loi 75.

L'AEFO appuie les propositions d'amendements des articles 3, 4 et 10 et de 12 à 21 sur les propositions qui permettront de rendre plus rapide la mise en place de conseils scolaires de langue française entre les élections ; de rendre plus claires certaines situations créées par l'ancien projet de loi 75, notamment en ce qui regarde la possibilité d'avoir une distribution géographique différente des conseillers scolaires entre les deux sections du conseil scolaire, ainsi que le calcul du nombre d'élèves sous la responsabilité des sections des conseils.

L'AEFO appuie les propositions d'amendements des articles 5 à 9. Ces amendements prolongent la durée de la protection accordée aux enseignantes et aux enseignants transférés des conseils publics vers les conseils catholiques.

Lors de la mise en oeuvre du financement des écoles secondaires catholiques, il a été clairement établi que les enseignantes et les enseignants qui seraient désignés pour être transférés aux conseils scolaires catholiques ne seraient pas pénalisés. Puisque la période de protection de dix ans tire à sa fin et que les transferts ne sont pas complétés, il est important de protéger les droits des enseignantes et des enseignants.



En guise de conclusion, l'AEFO croit que les amendements proposés par les projets de loi 12 et 13 assureront une mise en place calme et ordonnée des futurs conseils scolaires de langue française. Il est dans l'intérêt de tous les Ontariens et de toutes les Ontariennes d'assurer que notre système scolaire garantisse la meilleure éducation possible aux enfants. Les mesures à prendre pour respecter les droits des francophones comme ceux des anglophones doivent être prises de façon rationnelle et en harmonie. Dans ce but, l'AEFO recommande à ce comité et à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario d'adopter les projets de loi 12 et 13 dans les plus brefs délais possibles.

**Mrs Cunningham:** Thank you for coming this afternoon. It is good to see you again. You might be happy to know that with the sunset clause and with the intent of the minister, we are coming to like this bill a little bit better too. We are happy that through this process we have had even more input from the representatives today around improvements that can be made to the bill, so for that purpose alone it has been useful, I think, to be in this committee.

I was interested in your comments around your concerns around the emotional terms each time a school board is created, and I think in the beginning, certainly for some of us who have been around for a long period of time, the uncertainty is part of that, I am sure. You said that you like this method and that you also like the sunset clause. My thinking is that if you have the discussions in the community ahead of time and everything documented in a bill wherever possible, and I think that you are probably saying the same thing, that this is probably why we have not had the negative discussions in this Legislative Assembly, because in fact we did not have them. We did not even have them in the committee hearings because most of it had been done in the communities. I am wondering what your experience has been with the previous two school boards that were set up, if you can enlighten us at all.

**M. Millaire :** J'aimerais préciser une chose sur le fait que j'aime une «sunset clause»; je serais d'accord avec une «sunset clause». Je ne l'ai pas vue encore. Je n'ai pas d'échéancier, alors je ne peux pas me prononcer sur quelles, exactement, seraient les dates. Lorsque je parle de «sunset clause», c'est que je crois qu'il est important d'établir le plus rapidement possible des conseils scolaires, de donner un échéancier ou une période de temps qui serait acceptable pour la mise en place. Là, une fois que ça aura été fait, on pourra établir une «sunset clause».

Pour ce qui est du sujet, je crois que tout ce sujet ici a été discuté à mort. Alors, on a discuté de la création de conseils scolaires de langue française. C'étaient des débats très épineux dans certaines régions. Je crois que la consultation a été faite; ça ne s'appelait peut-être pas le projet de loi 12 ou 13 mais toutes les discussions ont été faites autour de ce sujet. Je crois que c'est le temps d'agir.

**The Chair:** The bells are ringing. It is a 10-minute bell. Do you want to ask a question now or shall we adjourn now and come back after? There is time for one more question.

**Mrs Cunningham:** Let's do it. We may even be able to finish if we all go in a hurry.

**The Chair:** Did you have another question?

**Mrs Cunningham:** Yes. I was wondering what your experience has been in the past with the negotiations that went around. I know it was very slow, but you said that there was very little discourse at the Legislative Assembly and I am wondering what your experience has been with the previous boards. Once they got here there was very little discourse here. You said there were no emotional tones in the Legislative Assembly; that is what you were looking for. I am thinking that there is a better opportunity if it takes place in the community and it is formulated ahead of time, but I just wondered if you had a feeling on that. I am not talking sunset now, because I too am not sure what it does mean; I am talking process.

1750

**M. Millaire :** Mes préoccupations initiales — je réitère le fait que cela a été discuté et que la communauté a été consultée — avant la deuxième lecture, nous étions très préoccupés que si la deuxième lecture était retardée de cinq ou six mois, alors on aurait encore eu les mêmes débats avec des groupes qui auraient été contre, des groupes qui auraient été pour. Alors, je crois que ce n'était pas nécessaire, à ce moment-là, de reprendre tout ce débat.

Dans les deux conseils qui ont été créés, je crois que les communautés ont fait leurs présentations et leurs revendications. Il y a eu des groupes qui se sont opposés mais je crois que, en général, on représentait deux grandes régions dont une avait une très forte majorité francophone.

Maintenant, avec des régions où ce n'est pas une forte majorité — c'est plutôt une minorité dans certains endroits — on pourrait avoir les mêmes débats qui recommencent pour toute la question «là où le nombre le justifie» et on n'en finirait pas.

J'aimerais revenir juste rapidement sur la question de la «sunset clause». On vient de m'indiquer ici qu'on parle de 1994. Moi je verrais une «sunset clause» plus loin que 1994. Moi, je verrais qu'on devrait passer à travers au moins une autre élection municipale, en d'autres mots, aller au moins jusqu'en 1997; 1994 c'est quand même assez près. Il faut que certains conseils commencent à penser exactement à ce qu'ils veulent. Ils doivent avoir, par exemple, un rapport du comité consultatif sur la gestion pour pouvoir choisir un modèle. Quant à moi, 1994, c'est trop près.

**The Chair:** There is time for one very short question and one very short answer, or we can come back.

**Interjection:** They are calling the members now.

**The Chair:** They are calling now? Are we going to come back following the vote? Agreed? We will reconvene, probably by about 5 or 10 after 6.

The committee recessed at 1753.

1805

**The Vice-Chair:** Can I call the committee to order, please? We have 10 minutes and I would call on Mr Martin. I do not see other members of the committee from the Conservative Party here so I do not know if we should

allow them a few minutes to get here, but I think that we should just proceed. Mr Martin has a question. I do not believe that there are any other questions at this time. Mr Martin, would you like to proceed with your question?

**Mr Martin:** It is actually a very simple question. I think he has probably already answered it, but I just want to hear it again. Your sense of this is that we should proceed with all haste to get this question out there and begin to come up with some structure as to how we will put these boards together and get on with life.

**M. Millaire :** Très bien, vous avez très bien résumé la question. C'est exactement cela qu'on veut. Oui, il y a eu beaucoup de consultations qui ont été faites. Je crois que la population est prête. Elle veut avoir sa propre gérance de ses écoles et de ses conseils scolaires. Je crois que le plus rapidement qu'on va pouvoir le faire, le mieux ce sera.

**The Vice-Chair:** If there are no other questions, I would take this opportunity—oh, yes. Final comment.

**M. Millaire :** J'aimerais juste faire une précision sur la «sunset clause», que je n'ai peut-être pas tellement bien comprise. J'ai entendu ça ici tantôt. Je voyais la «sunset clause» comme quoi qu'en 1994 il ne serait plus question qu'on puisse créer d'autres conseils scolaires de langue française. Ce n'était certainement pas ça mon but. Je crois que dans certains endroits, ça va prendre plus de temps que dans d'autres. Alors, si après, en 1994, à ce moment-là ça doit revenir à l'Assemblée législative à prendre les décisions, moi, j'aimerais que ce soit plus tard que ça. Maintenant, mon but n'était certainement pas de dire qu'après 1994, il ne serait plus question d'avoir d'autres conseils scolaires. C'était une mauvaise interprétation de ma part.

**The Vice-Chair:** The minister would respond to your comment.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** That was not at all the intention of the sunset. What it meant was that by regulation, without the legislation being in place—so our anticipation as a government is that the legislation would be in place prior to 1 January 1994.

**M. Millaire :** Merci.

**The Vice-Chair:** One last call for further questions. Mrs Cunningham, I give you one last opportunity to ask a question, if you have any further questions.

**Mrs Cunningham:** I did not get my last one answered, but I am not sure that it is fair to pursue it because we have all had the same difficulty in looking at what has happened before today and what that process was all about. I thought that it was a rather good one and I think that given your response to the last question, and that was about the sunset clause, I obviously personally prefer to see the public hearings in their communities and everything solved and put in the form of a bill that comes to this House without any—I forget what word you used, but you did not like the dissension that can take place here at the Legislative Assembly. I agree with you and that is why I hope that these two rounds of negotiations are very positive in the communities and that they can come up with

some solutions and agreements around the two boards that we are talking about.

I would hope that we would have a mechanism so that we will have individual bills come and I think that protects the public in all boards concerned not only in the short term but in the long term, because I think that these agreements—and I have been part of similar kinds of agreements with the provincial implementation commission in the past—are worked out very carefully over a long period of time and they can only be changed by the interested parties. I do not like the idea of having those kinds of agreements changed by resolution of the government as opposed to by a bill, an amendment to an act before the House. It is just because I have struggled through them over the years when the French sections were first being developed board by board and certainly through the extension of Bill 30. By the way, it was our party that objected and that is why we are in these hearings.

I think we have had from the government some amendments that we appreciate. One of them was the extension of Bill 30 where they were implementing year by year according to the bill and now they will in fact be able to implement two years at one time. It says three but I think it is realistically two years. That was all subject to public hearings and subject to input.

Certainly the boards' criticism is that it has come at the last minute and it is separate from the French issue. We have three issues in this bill, and that is why we referred it and I want to make that very clear to your group, because a comment was made that if we did not vote in favour—which in fact I hope we will be able to do; I am not sure, if we get the amendments we want—we were voting against minority language rights, and that is simply not true, and not of any individual member of the caucus, and I would like you to certainly express those regards to your group.

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**M. Millaire :** J'ai donné mon interprétation tantôt de la «sunset clause» et je pense que les gens qui étaient ici vont pouvoir faire part, justement, de mon interprétation qui n'était pas nécessairement la bonne.

Pour la question des consultations, si je prends, par exemple, Prescott et Russell : par trois fois la communauté est arrivée à un consensus pour avoir son conseil de langue française et encore ça traînait. Alors, lorsqu'un regroupement comme ça, à grande majorité francophone, ne peut pas avoir son conseil, alors comment est-ce qu'une petite communauté va pouvoir aller de l'avant avec toute l'opposition qu'il y a à l'extérieur ?

Alors, c'est un peu dans ce sens-là que je l'ai dit tantôt. Il y a eu beaucoup de consultations qui ont été faites. Même là où il y avait des gros groupes, les choses n'ont pas avancé. Alors, si on retourne ça et on rouvre encore toutes les discussions avec des petits groupes, il y a très peu de chance de survie.

**Mrs Cunningham:** Just a closing comment. I think in that instance where there was an agreement that the agreement should have been put in the form of a bill and it should have been passed by this House. I do not like the idea of reopening these negotiations. By the way, I ap-



precipitate the message that the minister is trying to send on this right now. We are not arguing about that, but I still stand by my words around an act of Parliament saying that is the way it is going to be and no one changes it unless all sides come together and it comes before this Legislative Assembly.

I notice that the member for Sault Ste Marie was constantly asking the same question, and that was, "Don't you think we need this bill to hurry things up?" I do not disagree with him, but there were parts of the bill that I did disagree with. I do not disagree with the member or the government around these two school boards. As a matter of fact, we may not get the consensus in one of those communities. Who knows? That is up to them and that is the wonderful thing about local autonomy. I would hope that eventually some kind of bill would come forth to meet the needs of all the communities involved.

**Mr Owens:** The government certainly shares the concerns of Robert Millaire and the group that you represent, which is clearly why we were wanting to go forward and have only two days of presentations and then get the bill back into the House ready for passage.

At that point, we will want to get out into the community and hear the depositions and the deputations that I think people want to make. But we do hear your concern, and consultation is something that could go endlessly. We have no interest in doing that. We want to move forward quickly.

**The Vice-Chair:** I would like to thank you for your presentations today.

**Mr Martin:** I would like to check with the side opposite with respect to the question we opened this day with and that was the question of whether we should extend these hearings and invite other folks in. My sense of what has happened today, the tone of it, is that at this point we really do not need to do that and that we should stick with the agenda that is in front of us here, which I believe is one or two more groups tomorrow and then we could get into debating the amendments.

Certainly we have agreed to one anyway, to look at it and to debate the amendments and get this back on the

floor so that we can in actual fact get this on the way and get the consultation process that is inherent in this bill on the way so that we can actually deliver to the francophone population of Ontario that which it sees as its right.

**The Vice-Chair:** We decided to address Mrs Cunningham's motion tomorrow. I think it would be appropriate to deal with that tomorrow, and I would call for an adjournment at this time until tomorrow for the committee to meet.

**Mr Martin:** I do not want to drop it at that. I think that by waiting till tomorrow we are also sending a signal out there to the community that there is possibly more consultation going to be happening. It creates, I think, expectations that will then be disappointed.

**Mrs Cunningham:** Can I just reassure the member that the three representatives of the caucus here—at least I was phoned and asked to represent our group—we all agreed on the two days, and I have not changed my mind on that. I have left my motion on the floor for a reason. I am not sending any signals out, nor am I telling anybody that he might be able to come. I will leave that in the hands of the committee, and that is just the way I operate. But I do feel better having heard today what I have heard, and I probably will feel even better tomorrow. But I do not want to cut anybody off. We have got a number of requests, and some of their concerns have been addressed, and maybe all of them will be addressed tomorrow. But I am not telling anybody that he can come. Obviously, the vote is with the government, so you have got nothing to lose except to appease me by waiting until tomorrow.

**The Vice-Chair:** I appreciate your concern, Mr Martin, but I think if I might suggest we still stick to our proposal to have Mrs Cunningham's motion dealt with tomorrow, unless there is great disagreement from you, then we will proceed in that fashion. Is that okay?

**Mr Martin:** Yes.

**The Vice-Chair:** This committee stands adjourned until 3:30 tomorrow afternoon, Tuesday.

The committee adjourned at 1817.

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## STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 35th Parliament

## Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Tuesday 18 December 1990

### Standing committee on social development

Education Amendment Act  
(Miscellaneous) 1990

Ottawa-Carleton French-language  
School Board Amendment Act,  
1990



## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 35<sup>e</sup> législature

## Journal des débats (Hansard)

Le mardi 18 décembre 1990

### Comité permanent des affaires sociales

Loi de 1990 modifiant la Loi sur  
l'éducation (dispositions diverses)

Loi de 1990 modifiant la Loi sur le  
Conseil scolaire de langue  
française d'Ottawa-Carleton

Chair: Elinor Caplan  
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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Tuesday 18 December 1990

The committee met at 1606 in room 151.

### EDUCATION AMENDMENT ACT (MISCELLANEOUS), 1990

Resuming consideration of Bill 12, An Act to amend the Education Act.

### OTTAWA-CARLETON FRENCH-LANGUAGE SCHOOL BOARD AMENDMENT ACT, 1990

### LOI DE 1990 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LE CONSEIL SCOLAIRE DE LANGUE FRANÇAISE D'OTTAWA-CARLETON

Resuming consideration of Bill 13, An Act to amend the Ottawa-Carleton French-Language School Board Act, 1988.

Reprise de l'étude du projet de loi 13, Loi portant modification de la Loi de 1988 sur le Conseil scolaire de langue française d'Ottawa-Carleton.

**The Chair:** I will call the meeting to order and invite the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation to come forward and make representation to the committee. I ask that you introduce yourselves. You have 30 minutes. You can use any or all of that time, although the committee would like to have some time to answer any questions and enter into discussion with you.

**Mr Martin:** I would like to ask at this time, before we start, that after all the presentations are made we have a short break to caucus.

**The Chair:** After all of the presentations? Yes, of course. We will plan a 10- or 15-minute break following the presentations and then reconvene.

**Mr Owens:** Do you think we could lower the heat in this room?

**The Chair:** It depends on how much talking there is as to how high the heat level gets, I have found. Could the clerk see if there is any way of turning down the temperature? It has been warm in the building; maybe it is just the season.

### ONTARIO SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' FEDERATION

**The Chair:** Welcome to the standing committee on social development. I would ask that you introduce yourselves and proceed with your presentation. You have 30 minutes for your presentation.

**Mr Head:** My name is Jim Head. I am the president of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation. On my right is Larry French, our legislative researcher, who is bilingual. On my far right is Jean Louis Diamond, who is a principal from Prescott-Russell in continuing education and a member of OSSTF. On my left is Ray Connolly, in charge of French-language services with the OSSTF as a staff person. Ray, however, was president of Sudbury

during the Bill 30 debates and subsequently, so he is new to staff, and I think both Jean Louis and Ray will add something to the Sudbury and Prescott-Russell considerations.

I want to thank you for the opportunity to make this submission. We are not going to read the whole thing. We are going to try to highlight sections of it, so I will not even go into the executive summary. I also want to thank the minister for being here at this early stage, something we are not quite used to; it is usually at the debating stage that we see the minister. I congratulate her on coming in so early.

Let me start on page 4 of our brief. You have had a chance to at least receive the brief of the French-language section of the Prescott-Russell County Board of Education. We are going to refer to it, but not in any depth or detail.

Section 2 of Bill 12 empowers the cabinet to establish school boards by regulation. OSSTF is committed to both English- and French-language public education. We have no difficulty in accepting the necessity of forming new French-language school boards where the local population so desires. However, we are concerned that the process of formation of boards be conducted with care and with continuous consultation to ensure that the viability of the new boards, as well as those from which they have sprung, is ensured.

We believe the minister intends to have a sunset clause on this legislation, and will assume that to be the case. However, if it is not, we would like to urge that. We will not bring any recommendation forward, but underline our support for some limitation on this extraordinary power. We suggest that there should be no need for its extension beyond the date of the tabling of the first report of the recently constituted French Language Education Governance Advisory Group.

The formation of French-language school boards by regulation as indicated in Bill 12 makes no explicit reference to a process of consultation with boards or other groups that are directly or indirectly affected by the creation of the new board or boards.

As you can see from the brief of the chairman of the French-language section of the Prescott-Russell public board, his group has serious concerns about the rapidity of the process of formation of a new board in his area. The French-language section of the public board is still struggling to find its feet two years after the Bill 30 extension that had left it in its present form. Now, it appears, another major change is in store. A serious consultation process is the minimum protection those potentially affected by decisions of this sort should be guaranteed. So we would make our first recommendation, for the record:

That section 2 of Bill 12, An Act to amend the Education Act, be amended by the insertion of a new clause

10(11b)(g) as follows, and that the succeeding clauses be relettered appropriately;

"(g) the process by which any board or employee group"—and that is what I wish to stress—"which may be affected directly or indirectly by the creation of a French-language school board is consulted prior to the creation of the new board."

Prescott-Russell is one of the areas where a new francophone board will be established. It is a sad but inescapable fact that the Prescott-Russell board of education is still struggling to cope with the aftermath of Bill 30 extension to the coterminous separate secondary school board. In good faith, the public board signed over five secondary schools through an en bloc transfer to the separate board. In return, the ministry pledged funding support for a new English-language secondary school in the western area of the county.

The pledge, unfortunately, has not been honoured. The \$9-million capital allocation agreed to has not been forthcoming. The capital request has risen to \$14 million this year, and the board has been given no indication that this request will be received any more favourably than the preceding one. In the meantime, public English-language students are sharing space in Plantagenet High School, an arrangement which, in the words of the chairperson of the Planning and Implementation Commission, PIC, is "fraught with difficulty," and will come to an end in June 1991.

Another dimension of the fiscal difficulty facing the board as a result of extension is a \$500,000 debt, the subject of an emergency audit granted to the board by PIC that is now under way. Little wonder that the chairperson of the public board has been forced to threaten to tear up the extension agreement and demand the return of the five schools previously transferred. That takes us to our recommendation 2: That prior to the formation of any new board in the Prescott-Russell area, all financial commitments, including those pertaining to the construction of a new school in the western area of the county, made by the Ministry of Education to the Prescott-Russell County Board of Education in the memorandum of agreement of 25 May 1988 be honoured.

Sudbury: In the period just prior to the passing of Bill 30, relations between the two school boards, the Sudbury Board of Education and the Sudbury District Roman Catholic Separate School Board, became quite strained. The separate board, which at the time was predominantly francophone, believed that it had a right to all of the French-language high schools in the Sudbury area as a large majority of the parents of students in French-language public schools paid separate school taxes. As all francophone primary schools in the area at the time were separate, parents were forced to pay separate taxes to obtain French-language education whether or not they were committed to Roman Catholic separate education.

As well as a completely functional separate school board with both English- and French-language panels, there existed in Sudbury two sectors within the public board. The division here was between trustees elected by

public and separate ratepayers; the latter were francophone.

What makes this latter endeavour so difficult is the fact that the feeder schools of all of the French-language public high schools and also of many of the English-language high schools in the Sudbury area were, and to a great degree still are, primary separate schools. Despite strong petitions to the provincial government and representations to PIC, access to the grade 8 students by guidance counsellors of the public board to students in the separate feeder schools is still denied. The public board, on the other hand, has shown a willingness to permit reciprocal access to public primary schools.

The competition between opposing interests, both linguistic and religious, with all the permutations and combinations possible in a multicultural area like Sudbury, is fostering division, disrespect and animosity within the educational community, within the religious community and within the community at large. The divisiveness created as the result of Bill 30 is felt sorely in the community of Rayside. The struggle between the two boards, which became intense after Bill 30, is centred here although the strife may engulf the entire Sudbury community and provoke serious and public linguistic and, to some degree, religious bickering. Much of the difficulty the area is facing has to do with the manner in which Bill 30 was implemented. The new government and opposition parties now have an opportunity and a responsibility to try to bring about a resolution to problems caused by a law whose passage all provincial parties supported.

Rayside: Prior to Bill 30, Ecole secondaire Rayside was the single high school serving the community of Rayside-Balfour, as well as the francophone communities situated in Chelmsford and Azilda. The students came from a number of separate elementary feeder schools. Enrolment at the high school has reached a critical point. There are presently 29 students in grade 9, 41 in grade 10, 146 in grade 12 and 33 in grade 13. With grades 7 and 8 and the 69 adults recently brought into the school, the enrolment is 425. After next year's graduation, the situation will be bleak. The francophone trustees of the Sudbury board want autonomy. They would also like to create a regional, public, francophone board which would encompass many of the small school boards to which they already provide supervisory service.

The resolution of the problems facing Rayside in particular, and French-language public education in the Sudbury basin in general, obviously surpasses the abilities of the local boards. The good offices of the minister and the resources provided by the senior level of government are urgently needed to ensure that public francophone education survives in the area.

We remind members of the social development committee of the obligations incumbent on all parties, and in particular on the Legislature, to ensure that public education survives while separate education is extended. Then Minister of Education Sean Conway articulated the six principles underlying the extension of public funding to Roman Catholic secondary schools when he introduced Bill 30 in 1985.



The first principle is the need to protect the viability of the public secondary school system. This was enshrined in six guidelines. I just point out three: (a), (b) and (c). The criteria must permit the Roman Catholic school board to provide viable secondary school education. It, however, must promote the best interests of public education in Ontario and must ensure the viability of the secondary school programs offered by the public board, especially in single-secondary-school communities.

We have included the six principles as well as the PIC guidelines as appendices B and C. In light of them, we expect that as much care must be taken to ensure the continued viability of the public system that has been left behind as is taken to ensure the successful establishment of the new board. It is in that spirit that the following recommendations are made. I will read them for the record.

**Recommendation 3:** That the Minister of Education, through her ministry, assure the continued existence of Ecole secondaire Rayside as the public school to provide education for those members of the Rayside-Balfour community who choose not to send their children to a denominational school.

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**Recommendation 4:** That the Minister of Education, through her ministry, provide the funding necessary to assure the provision of an attractive range of options so that Rayside can continue to draw students.

**Recommendation 5:** That the Minister of Education, through her Ministry, halt the extension of Ecole Champlain beyond grade 10 until such time as it can be established that the community of Rayside-Balfour can reasonably support the existence of two high schools. And I think with the enrolment there you can see that is not a possibility right now.

**Recommendation 6:** That the Minister of Education, through her ministry, assure the access of guidance officers from either system to the students in primary schools in the region.

**Recommendation 7:** That the Minister of Education establish mechanisms and direct funding from the province to assure that teachers, teachers with positions of responsibility and administrative personnel do not suffer financially or in pensions or in working conditions, such as administrative periods for major heads of departments, as a result of the expansion of Ecole Champlain.

Section 5 of Bill 12 allows Roman Catholic school boards to extend and to receive funding through all grades at one time if the boards purchase the service by means of an agreement with another board. Despite the fact that the protection implicit in the PIC process remains intact for this type of extension, OSSTF has serious concerns about this *carte blanche* access to extension being granted to any board. If extension occurs, the public board at one swoop loses access to the assessment that was attached to those students for whom education is now being purchased. Because of the realities of the funding of local education—or, more accurately, the underfunding of local education, as we termed it in the recent election campaign—any loss of assessment carries with it a significant concomitant financial penalty for the board undergoing the loss. The burden

of over-the-ceiling expenditure, which has increased every year since 1975, falls heavier on the taxpayers who remain as the assessment base has shrunk.

In this way, as with the pooling of commercial and industrial assessment, unless matching compensation is guaranteed public boards will once again be forced to subsidize separate education. This, we maintain, is an unacceptable consequence of Bill 30 and must not be allowed to happen. If public boards do lose assessment in this way, there is a moral obligation on the government to compensate them.

**Recommendation 8:** That section 5 and any other sections dealing with extension through purchase of service be deleted.

Section 22 of the bill gives retroactive permission to the Haldimand-Norfolk separate board to extend in such a manner as outlined above through purchase of service. We understand that the Haldimand-Norfolk board will purchase service from neighbouring separate boards in Brant county and in Hamilton-Wentworth. We oppose the ratification of this process, especially in context of a bill where this action is the precedent for other separate boards to extend in the same way through purchase. This is not an economically justifiable or even viable method of offering this service. Buses will transport students out of Haldimand-Norfolk counties past in-county public secondary schools well able to meet the needs of local separate students. This is a wasteful process, and at the same time strips away potential students from the public secondary system whose numbers would help keep programs more economically viable and even in existence.

We remind members of the committee of the result of the Provincial Auditor's audit of the York county separate board. He discovered an annual overexpenditure in the area of transportation costs within the board of \$1 million because of generous policies and system inefficiencies. Is this the sort of inefficiency the new purchase of service approval is building into the Haldimand-Norfolk system?

**Recommendation 9:** That the ministry investigate the cost implications of purchase of service agreements in the manner implemented by the Haldimand-Norfolk school board.

**Conclusions:** The problems we have raised in relation to the extension of funding to separate secondary schools and the extension of access by our francophone population to education suited to its needs do have a potential solution. OSSTF recommended to the previous Treasurer—without success, I might add—that he offer incentive funding to encourage public, separate and francophone boards to share services. We feel, despite this rebuff, that it is now opportune to consider the concept of the unified or co-operative school board. I might say, coming just recently from Newfoundland, that is certainly the model they are working towards, a system that was very highly denominational at one stage.

As a first step in this time of pressure on fiscal resources at all levels of government, the co-operative school board offers compelling advantages. Such co-operation would provide an appropriate introductory phase preceding a unified school board.

OSSTF joined with the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association during the recent election campaign in a joint press statement calling for improved funding to elementary and secondary education in Ontario. This co-operation was a breakthrough, and we hope marked a turning point in the relationship of the two federations after the strain that Bill 30 had imposed. Both federations look forward to fulfilment of the pledge to offer 60% funding, made by the government.

In its response to the Provincial Auditor's report, the Ministry of Education replied: "The ministry endorses the concept of school boards sharing resources and will continue to promote co-operation and sharing among boards. The ministry will communicate its support in a memo to school boards on this and other issues raised by the Provincial Auditor."

While the production of a memo is encouraging, OSSTF feels that the real commitment to a policy must be reflected in any organization's budgetary priorities. Until the minister and the Treasurer combine to make it worth while financially for boards to co-operate, justifications will continue to be found not to do so.

I will stop at that. We do believe there is a growing desire for more co-operation, more unity in Canada. Surely to goodness we know that at this time more than any other we need it. So I would finish with recommendation 10 on page 18:

That the Minister of Education initiate discussions with all the major stakeholders in education with a view to creating unified school boards which will ensure continued provision of educational services, including those offered on an open-access, non-denominational basis by public school boards, and those required by the Constitution of Canada for francophone and Roman Catholic citizens of Ontario.

We would be happy to answer any questions.

**Mr Beer:** I just want to be clear on a couple of things. Having had some knowledge of those situations and having over a period of time worked with people there, I think that on the comments you make around Prescott-Russell and Sudbury, there is no question that there are a number of issues that are not necessarily directly related to the proposed legislation, but where actions by government with respect to the kind of consultation that is done, the kind of funding that is provided, would certainly assist in working through some of those issues. I think we always need to be aware of that, whatever the process is that is set up.

I want to be clear on perhaps two of the key issues that I think have emerged in the discussions around these two bills.

One is, first of all, the power of regulation. I think both in the House and in committee yesterday in our discussions around that there was agreement by everyone that we recognize some of the problems around the regulatory power and that the government would be prepared to bring in an amendment. We talked about perhaps the more ideal situation, which would be to move by way of legislation when new boards are created. But my sense is that I think

we can find an amendment that would meet the issue that you and others have raised.

With respect to extension and the question of purchase of service, I am wondering if the problem you raise here might also be met by clarifying, if that is the word, the role of PIC, the Planning and Implementation Commission. It seemed that in part at least the issue raised yesterday by the Ontario Public School Boards' Association was in making sure that everything had been examined, that there could not be a kind of unilateral extension which would have perhaps severe financial implications for the public board.

Can you see that there might be a way for us to work through that one, which would, I suppose, recognize, flowing from Bill 30, that as to the right of those Roman Catholic school boards that had not extended, that right is indeed open to them, but there be a process in place which would ensure that we recognize the implications of the extension of that right on the public boards, and that would have to go through a very full Planning and Implementation Commission hearing so that all of the various issues, facts and so on would be brought to light?

1630

**Mr Head:** Perhaps I could just make two comments on each of your points. First of all, we understand why the minister might want to use regulation with the varieties of boards that may be coming forward under this process. As long as there is fair consultation, whether it be through legislation or through the regulation, we would be satisfied. Our experience, though, which leads me into your second point, has been that quite often PIC chose to only speak to the boards, and often in camera.

We certainly had that experience in Kapuskasing, where we had to go up and help our teachers bring to public opinion what was going on. The public and the teachers and employees of the board were left quite out of the process, and the particular person involved had a track record of that kind of approach. So the consultation for us is most important, as I am sure it is for the government.

**Mr J. Wilson:** I apologize to the committee for being late. I was chatting with one of the cabinet ministers I have been trying to chat with for a few weeks.

To the presenter, you mention a number of concerns in here about the extension of the French-language board at Prescott-Russell. I was wondering what your comments would be with regard to the establishment of a similar board in Simcoe county, which is one of the areas I represent. Second, I guess, or along the same line, is the cost of implementation of such a board and its impact on the public school board.

**Mr Head:** I am going to let Jean Louis and Larry answer this, but it is my understanding that at this point in time in Simcoe county there is no desire for such a board. Am I wrong on that?

**Mr J. Wilson:** There must be a desire of some sort because the minister has announced that there are going to be some discussions.

**Mr Head:** I have certainly heard the discussions around the school.



**Mr French:** We have participated in the debate on the future of French-language education in the Penetanguishene area. I think our principle is that we support the French-language communities in their aspirations to have their own governance, if the protections for the boards that remain are there and the French community is able to choose on an option in which, for purposes, I guess, of unanimity or whatever, everybody is forced into the same mould. I know the French community in Penetanguishene is split on the mode of education it would prefer to see at this point. If the process that forms the board is able to reflect the needs of these francophone parents, both public and separate, I think we would support the formation of the board.

One comment on the PIC process, on Mr Beer's comment that we made the point to the minister and she did not quite agree with us. There is a sense we have at times that the PIC process is more zealous in making sure that the implementation occurs successfully and that the process works in that direction, rather than making sure that what is left behind is going to be okay, is going to be viable. We wonder what would happen in the formation of new boards, or at least extension through purchase for new boards, without financial protections that would be guaranteed. It would be the same case in Simcoe county.

**Mr Diamond:** For Prescott-Russell at this time, the section de langue française is not ready. We just went through a divorce. It was painful, and we do not say, "No, we say it is not the time right now to have the homogeneous francophone board in our region."

**The Chair:** Mr Martin? You have just a few minutes.

**Mr Martin:** I want right in the beginning to say to you that certainly we share the sense you presented here so clearly that the whole situation, particularly in Sudbury and Prescott-Russell, is a bit of a mess. Certainly it is recognized that this whole process of Bill 30 and francophone rights is a new phenomenon on the horizon that we are trying to work out. I think it only logical that we would expect that there would be some need to shift some stuff around and make sure that we do it right and that there be a process put in place to speak to doing it right. There is that reality.

There is also the reality of our being up against the possibility of court action and being forced to do things that maybe we do not want to do, because of court action. I think we are here right now because there is that possibility and because of a court action back in 1986, the Mahé case.

I think it is the feeling of the ministry that we would prefer to do it without court action. I think that means that we move quickly. But I do not think there is anywhere in the bill that we presented the desire not to consult. It is just that we want to consult in a time that speaks to getting on with it so that we do not end up in the courts and having to do things that we do not want to do.

Does that not make some sense to you?

**Mr Head:** We certainly understand the motivation for the quickness of the bill and we have no problem with that. We support the trustee elections within that context. But I

can simply tell you—and I do not believe it is this particular government's fault—that this is the fastest brief we have ever produced in our history. I hope that this is only an anomaly and that the future consultation will be a much longer process, with our having a chance to think out and think through some of the legislation. I am not trying to find fault. I understand the motivation, but I think process is really germane to anything we do.

**The Chair:** I have Mrs McLeod, Mr Owen and Mr Wilson again, and we have three minutes left.

**Mrs McLeod:** I will be very specific. I am a little bit confused about a seeming inconsistency. I appreciate the speed with which the brief was prepared, but in your discussion about the potential advantages of a unified school board you do talk about the avoidance of duplication, particularly in high-cost programs, through purchase of service in areas such as technological education. Recognizing that has some advantages—although I recognize the unified school board is not a shared vision in many quarters—the recommendation not to consider looking at extension of purchase as an option, for example in Haldimand-Norfolk and by extension then into northern areas, confuses me a bit. You have mentioned the lack of consultation and the way in which PIC consults.

The public boards yesterday gave us some indication that with a full review at an early stage by the Planning and Implementation Commission they felt there was some merit in extension through purchase of service. Could you be just a little more specific as to whether you see a way in which that could be made to work and have the advantages you outline later?

**Mr Head:** What we are concerned about is the particular Haldimand-Norfolk situation whereby the purchase is going as far as Hamilton-Wentworth when we think the service is already in either Haldimand or Norfolk. So we are not opposed to the purchase of service for either board. That works quite well and it has been in the legislation for a while. It is the extent of where that purchase is going.

**Mrs McLeod:** Do you feel the Planning and Implementation Commission could deal with that in a review process of the viability of the particular proposals for purchase?

**Mr Head:** I would defer to those who know legislation better than I.

**Mr French:** One would hope that the PIC process would take all the safeguards into account, but we have one real concern at present that we mentioned about the PIC process. The employee groups are excluded unless the boards decide to bring them in. I have the honour to sit beside Jean Louis. It is a miracle this gentleman has a job. The federations and so on could not participate in the discussions upon which his fate was established. They still cannot.

We think the little amendment we are promoting that gives the minister the right to make a regulation that allows for consultation, which allows it for employee groups, is one of the great safeguards that would be universal. No matter what the PIC debate, and whether it is extension through purchase of service or extension grade

by grade, the formation of a new board, if the employee groups are consulted, then I think a lot of the difficulties that our francophone members have faced—Mr Connolly knows the situation well in Sudbury where a lot of people are hanging by their fingertips. This would be very helpful, that kind of consultation.

1640

**The Chair:** The time for the presentation has concluded. The minister would like to say something.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Just in terms of the PIC process, that again is something we inherited. The PIC process has been gone through thoroughly in Haldimand-Norfolk. I understand your objection to the process and certainly take that under advisement, but in the circumstance of Haldimand-Norfolk, that process has been gone through, there has been an agreement reached among the boards. I do not feel at all that this is any reason for us as a government to delay implementation of an agreement that has been reached under the existing regulations.

**Mr Head:** If I could just comment, we can appreciate that position. We would not like to think it was going to be a precedent, given that it is existing.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much for appearing before the committee. The committee will now hear the next presentation.

#### OTTAWA-CARLETON FRENCH-LANGUAGE SCHOOL BOARD

#### CONSEIL SCOLAIRE DE LANGUE FRANÇAISE D'OTTAWA-CARLETON

**The Chair:** We will move on to the Ottawa-Carleton French-Language School Board. Bienvenue. Would you introduce yourselves. You have 30 minutes for your presentation. I hope you will leave some time so the committee can ask some questions. Perhaps you would like to begin.

**M. Ferrand :** Je voudrais présenter Raymond Jubainville, surintendant, gestion des affaires du Conseil des écoles publiques d'Ottawa-Carleton ou, pour qui le préfère, section publique du Conseil scolaire de langue française d'Ottawa-Carleton. Je suis Yvon Ferrand, le président du Conseil des écoles publiques d'Ottawa-Carleton.

Permettez-moi, tout d'abord, de vous remercier de nous avoir accordé cette occasion de vous présenter ce mémoire. Vous comprendrez aussi que notre présentation sera brève, étant donné que nous n'avons reçu confirmation de notre parution que hier après-midi.

Nous avons fait une analyse préliminaire des projets de loi 12 et 13. Nous n'avons aucune objection aux dispositions du projet de loi 13, mais nous accueillons toutefois le projet de loi 12 avec des émotions partagées. Heureux que le gouvernement veuille agir dans le dossier de l'autogestion des conseils scolaires par les francophones, nous sommes néanmoins préoccupés par la dérogation au processus législatif et les abus possibles de pouvoir dans un futur rapproché ou éloigné.

Pouvoirs accordés au lieutenant-gouverneur en conseil. Le projet de loi 12 accorde des pouvoirs très vastes au lieutenant-gouverneur en conseil dans la mise sur pied de

conseils scolaires de langue française. Comme francophones, nous ne pouvons qu'applaudir des mécanismes qui permettront d'accélérer ce dossier qui a été surétudié. Mais à titre de citoyennes et citoyens et à titre de représentantes et représentants élus de citoyens francophones, nous sommes préoccupés du fait que l'approche proposée émette les possibilités concrètes de représentation et de consultation qui découlent normalement du processus législatif. Les francophones du secteur public sont un groupe minoritaire au sein d'un groupe minoritaire et sont conséquemment très conscients de leur dépendance sur les pouvoirs en place, et d'autant plus nerveux de voir le lieutenant-gouverneur en conseil s'approprier des pouvoirs aussi vastes.

A titre d'exemple, si ce projet de loi était en place, nous ne pourrions pas vous adresser la parole aujourd'hui. Nous ne serions qu'avisés des changements effectués. Si nous comprenons bien, les dispositions prévues aux nouveaux alinéas (11b)j) et (11b)k) permettraient au lieutenant-gouverneur en conseil, lors de la création de conseils scolaires francophones en province, d'abolir un conseil scolaire ou une section d'un tel conseil. Donc, nous pourrions recevoir dans quelques semaines un avis d'un règlement qui prévoit la dissolution de la section publique ou de la section catholique du Conseil scolaire de langue française d'Ottawa-Carleton.

De même, le Conseil d'éducation de Carleton pourrait être avisé, par voie de réglementation, qu'il est dissous et qu'un nouveau conseil est établi à sa place ou simplement que ses biens sont modifiés ou transférés au Conseil des écoles catholiques romaines de Carleton. Voilà une façon expéditive de résoudre les problèmes de transfert de biens découlant de la Loi 30 de 1986.

Nous sommes confiants que le gouvernement n'agirait pas ainsi avec les conseils de l'est de l'Ontario. Lorsque nous sommes minoritaires, il est plus facile pour un gouvernement de modifier notre statut puisque nous n'avons pas les mêmes recours politiques. Par exemple, nous nous interrogeons sur le recours politique qu'auront les contribuables du secteur public francophone dans Prescott-Russell si le gouvernement procède à la création d'un conseil scolaire catholique francophone dans cette région. Par la Loi 30, le gouvernement a permis le transfert de toutes les écoles secondaires francophones de l'est de l'Ontario au secteur catholique, laissant ainsi les contribuables publics francophones de Prescott-Russell sans école secondaire. Et quel recours politique aurons-nous puisque le projet de loi 12 accorde au lieutenant-gouverneur en conseil le pouvoir d'altérer toute la structure du Conseil scolaire de langue française d'Ottawa-Carleton ? La Loi de 1988 sur la création du Conseil scolaire de langue française d'Ottawa-Carleton, la Loi 109, doit être modifiée, mais serons-nous consultés ou seulement avisés des modifications ?

Nous croyons pouvoir faire confiance aux intentions du gouvernement en place qui, de toute évidence, désire accélérer le dossier de la création de conseils scolaires de langue française, mais ce gouvernement sera-t-il toujours en place ? Ce gouvernement connaît-il les besoins des francophones du secteur public ? Ces priorités politiques



changeront-elles ? Pourra-t-il résister aux groupes de pression majoritaires dans l'élaboration des règlements ? Aura-t-il l'occasion d'entendre les représentants des groupes minoritaires au sein des minorités ?

Ayant vécu la mise sur pied du Conseil scolaire de langue française d'Ottawa-Carleton, nous savons qu'un gouvernement est parfois difficile à rejoindre. Depuis quatre ans, les représentants des francophones du secteur public ont soulevé la question du financement inadéquat de la section publique du Conseil scolaire de langue française d'Ottawa-Carleton.

Après quatre ans, le bureau régional du ministère de l'Éducation nous a enfin rencontrés pour nous dire, en quelques mots, que c'est notre responsabilité de résoudre le problème du sous-financement prévu par la loi de 1988. C'est à nous de réduire le niveau des services offerts aux francophones du secteur public car nous sommes sous-financés. C'est à nous de résoudre le manque de places-élèves pour répondre aux besoins d'un système en expansion rapide — entre autres, une augmentation de tout près de 2165 % en 10 ans au palier élémentaire — malgré notre déficit important.

Nous pourrions vous faire part de multiples problèmes associés à la création du Conseil scolaire de langue française à Ottawa-Carleton, mais cela n'est pas notre objectif aujourd'hui. Nous voulons simplement exprimer une mise en garde d'accorder des pouvoirs aussi vastes au lieutenant-gouverneur en conseil sans quelques mécanismes concrets de représentation pour les groupes minoritaires. Si l'objectif est d'agir rapidement dans certains dossiers urgents, ne serait-il pas sain alors d'inclure une clause limitant ces pouvoirs dans le temps ?

Répartition des conseillers et conseillères scolaires. En le percevant comme une première étape en termes d'équilibre, nous appuyons les modifications apportées par le projet de loi au calcul de la répartition des conseillers et conseillères au sein des conseils scolaires qui ont une section de langue française, en utilisant une base proportionnelle aux effectifs scolaires. En décembre 1989, lors des dépôts des projets de loi 64 et 65, nous avons d'ailleurs présenté devant ce même comité une argumentation semblable pour que la répartition des taxes résidentielles et commerciales s'effectue sur une base proportionnelle aux effectifs scolaires.

Nous ne pouvons qu'espérer que le gouvernement poursuivra sa réflexion en ce sens lorsqu'il reverra les méthodes de taxation en fonction de la Charte des droits et libertés et des jugements de la Cour suprême. Puisque la Loi de 1988 sur la création du Conseil scolaire de langue française d'Ottawa-Carleton miroite la Loi sur l'éducation dans la répartition des conseillers et conseillères scolaires, nous présumons que le même mécanisme s'appliquera à Ottawa-Carleton. Nous soulignons que la répartition des pouvoirs et des domaines de compétence de chaque section du Conseil scolaire de langue française est très différente de celle des conseils scolaires ayant des sections de langue française.

Dans ce contexte, le gouvernement aurait eu avantage à reconsidérer la répartition des conseillers scolaires au sein de notre conseil afin de refléter la structure particulière du

Conseil scolaire de langue française d'Ottawa-Carleton. Une répartition égale de conseillers scolaires de chaque section pour siéger au conseil plénier permettrait possiblement de créer un climat plus propice au partage des compétences entre les deux sections et le conseil plénier.

Nous vous remercions de cette occasion de vous présenter nos préoccupations relatives aux projets de loi 12 et 13. Nous sommes disposés à répondre à vos questions dans le temps qui est laissé à notre disposition.

#### 1650

Si vous me le permettez, je voudrais souligner certaines difficultés associées avec la Loi 109.

1. Le droit de propriété. À notre conseil, aux écoles publiques, c'est la question que l'on se pose et que l'on pose aux experts en droit, autant du conseil plénier que des sections. Qui est le propriétaire ou qui sont les propriétaires ? Est-ce que c'est le plénier ou est-ce que c'est la section ? Le plénier semble en avoir la possession et la section le contrôle. Ce n'est pas clair et on a beaucoup de difficultés avec ça.

2. L'identification des contribuables, le recensement et la définition des francophones.

3. L'accès universel : l'accès aux écoles et l'exigence d'en être un contribuable. Je voudrais souligner ici le fait que nous pourrions avoir un minimum de huit contribuables au secteur public, c'est-à-dire les huit élus. Ce seraient les seuls contribuables aux écoles publiques. Par contre, on pourrait avoir 1000, 2000 ou 3000 élèves. L'accès universel permet justement à ce que tout le monde vienne dans nos écoles même s'ils n'en sont pas contribuables.

4. Le financement — ou le sous-financement. Vous n'êtes pas sans savoir que nous avons une dette qui s'élève à tout près de dix millions de dollars actuellement et nous n'avons que deux années derrière nous.

5. La superstructure de notre Conseil scolaire de langue française : le plénier et les deux sections, trois directeurs, X nombre de surintendants.

6. Un trésorier commun. C'est-à-dire, vous avez un trésorier qui répond aux besoins du conseil plénier et aux besoins des sections — le même employé du plénier sous l'autorité d'un autre directeur. C'est une situation assez cocasse. Comment le gouvernement de l'Ontario fonctionnerait-il si son Trésorier était un employé du fédéral — par exemple, le ministre des Finances ? Nous, on vit cette situation-là, le concept de trois employeurs et les problèmes relatifs à la loi sur les relations de travail, à la Loi sur l'équité salariale, à la Loi sur la négociation collective entre conseils scolaires et enseignants.

8. Le refus du ministère de l'Éducation de reconnaître la structure élaborée du conseil et la compétence exclusive des sections. On nous dit tout le temps que nous, comme francophones, on doit négocier avec la section catholique. Ça crée une situation assez spéciale. On n'a pas du tout les mêmes exigences pour les conseils anglophones.

J'ai douze points, pour qu'on ne perde pas patience.

9. L'inégalité de représentation politique au plénier. Ça crée une situation où il est très difficile de favoriser la mise en commun entre les deux sections. Lorsque vous mettez des choses en commun, à ce moment-là, c'est un vote

majoritaire. Donc, une représentation de quatorze au secteur catholique et huit au public crée une situation qui ne favorisera probablement pas ou très peu la mise en commun de services, bien qu'on ait réussi à en mettre quatre dans des conditions assez spéciales.

10. La résolution de conflits par la Commission des langues d'enseignement de l'Ontario. Il n'y a aucune garantie que les contribuables publics ne seront représentés et pour nous c'est une faiblesse majeure au sein de cette commission.

11. Le transfert des biens non résolus après trois ans. On en est à notre troisième année et on n'a toujours pas conclu dans la totalité les transferts de biens entre les conseils existants et les nouvelles sections du Conseil scolaire de langue française.

12. La garantie d'emploi. Il y a des limites qui sont imposées à la section, sa capacité d'atteindre les objectifs fixés par la politique d'équité en matière d'emploi.

J'aurais aussi une question que je voudrais poser à monsieur le Président. L'article 2 du projet de loi 12 permet au lieutenant-gouverneur en conseil d'émettre des règlements pour modifier ou changer l'application des dispositions de la Loi sur l'éducation, de la Loi sur l'évaluation foncière et de la Loi sur les élections municipales. Aura-t-il aussi l'autorité de modifier ou d'exclure l'application des dispositions de la Loi de 1988 sur le Conseil scolaire de langue française d'Ottawa-Carleton, sur la Loi de 1987 sur l'équité salariale et sur la Loi sur les relations de travail ?

Ceci termine ma présentation et j'aimerais, si on pouvait, qu'on me donne la réponse à la dernière question. Nous l'apprécierions.

**The Vice-Chair:** I will entertain any questions. I do not have a speaking order here.

**Mrs Cunningham:** You have absolutely baffled my mind. I mean, there are so many problems that you have raised. We have people coming before this committee telling us that we are not moving quickly enough in the establishment of school boards. Some of us are sitting here feeling guilty because we are being accused of not supporting minority-language rights. This committee has some work to do here. We are trying to get good information and good advice. You can imagine my dilemma in even looking at the questions you have asked. You do not have some of the answers. There were at least three questions out of that last group that perhaps the minister is considering, or the minister's staff. I am just wondering if anybody is going to respond before I start asking questions. I think it is fair that they do that first.

**The Vice-Chair:** The minister has indicated that she would like to comment. I would therefore ask her to comment.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** I would like to comment. I think the kinds of problems that the speaker outlines with the Ottawa-Carleton French-language board signify very clearly to the opposition why we did not want to simply mirror that act. There are real problems with the act that created those boards. Both sections of the boards are identifying very serious problems with that act and certainly the min-

istry knows that whole situation will need to be revisited. There is just no question about that.

The issue we are dealing with right now I see as being a somewhat different one. That is a very complex issue to deal with because of the effort to have a unified board, one of the real concerns that we have had in trying to meet the needs of the francophone populations that have indicated they are ready to form French-speaking services and governance for themselves. And they have the right to do that, especially with the weight of the Mahé decision behind them.

With Bill 12 we are trying to find a way to allow that to happen in as few boards as possible, as we have indicated before in these hearings, while all these issues are being looked at by the French Language Education Governance Advisory Group. It is certainly our hope that with the study and the work of that committee, which will be done using consultation with groups that have already formed, with groups that have aspirations to form, with groups in communities that do not want francophone boards to split off from public boards or from Catholic boards, we will then be able to come together and have a thorough discussion of all the issues that are required in order to put French-language governance into a context that is going to be reasonable for all of us. In the meantime, we are putting this bill forward in an attempt to avoid a court-mandated situation. We are in danger of having that.

So we are in no way denying the issues and the problems that have been raised by the speaker but would say that those could only be complicated if we were not to take leadership at this time and allow French-language governance to be mandated by the courts, as opposed to negotiated within the communities concerned.

1700

**Mr Ferrand:** If I may comment on the minister's comment, first of all, thank you for giving me the opportunity to raise some comments or add to this, Madam Minister. I have to admit this is the first time I have met with the Minister of Education. I have only been elected for two and a half years. We happen to be the first French board ever created and we are the only one, as far as I am concerned. We have had the chance to meet on many occasions with Mr Beer, and it was appreciated, but never with the Minister of Education. We would have made the Minister of Education aware of a lot of the problems.

A lot of the solutions that we would propose remain within our own pile of paper, because we did provide the minister with a copy of whatever reports we produce, but we could never discuss it. But some of the solutions for Prescott-Russell might be within the Ottawa-Carleton/Prescott-Russell combination. The cost of operating a school board in itself, within a structure that would need to be modified, may be within a concept that is similar to what is proposed under Bill 109.

You talk about a regional concept school board, and you do not create many school boards but maybe a bigger one with a better structure, and you remain within a philosophy, making things easier to administer within the



whole group. Everybody sitting at a table at least has the same philosophy, which eliminates a major difficulty.

Financing is a main problem that we have had. We are at \$10 million with a line of credit of about \$15 million. Will I have to take you to court to get things moving? If I understand the reason why things are going to move faster, it is because somebody threatened to go to court or said, "Move." I am only referring to what I have heard, and I do not think it is the way to do things, but we are looking forward to sitting down with you. I would gladly go home with a date for a meeting with the Minister of Education.

I appreciate the fact that you said you are open to studying and looking at our problem and probably helping us solve it. The first problem that we need to solve is that your representative from la régionale in Ottawa has served us a letter saying that within the next three months we need to come up with a plan that would be viable and acceptable for the \$10-million shortage, at a rate of increase for tax of 1%, bring in \$55,000 for every 1%. I do not think I could come up with a plan, so I will need your help very badly.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** I do not think this is the forum to discuss the financial issues that are being faced by your board. The letter you got is one that any board that is in deficit gets automatically, as you are well aware. It is against the Education Act for a board to deliberately deficit finance, and we need to have a discussion in a very different context around that. This was not the occasion for discussing your financial issues in this way.

**Mr Ferrand:** I appreciate your comment. I certainly did not do that deliberately. I am a newcomer in this game and doing my best, as I have in the last two years. But if you suggest another place, please, I will take your advice.

**The Vice-Chair:** We might get on with the questions. I see Mr Wilson is ready to ask a question if Mrs Cunningham has completed her questioning.

**Mrs Cunningham:** Do you want me to finish?

**The Vice-Chair:** Sure.

**Mrs Cunningham:** First of all, just to let everybody feel very comfortable, I was always hoping that when I was elected to this Legislative Assembly, some of us would be allowed to think out loud. We asked for people to come before this committee today for the best advice we could get, so if we get into our own problems some days, I believe it is because that is what we know best. I would think, and I think the minister would agree, that you are probably one of the best advisers she could probably seek in moving in the direction of establishing more French-language school boards, because that is where in fact one does go by trial and error in the very beginning. I think basically that your apologies are not necessary and that we appreciate your frankness. I myself make lots of mistakes in public and I am supposed to be an MPP, so I make no apologies for it.

I would just say this: I am sorry, but I was having some difficulty with this. In the very beginning, your concern was around the question of whether it would be appropriate for this legislation to proceed separate from having a bill for each school board. When I say bill, I am

talking about legislation so that it cannot be changed unilaterally by the minister or by an order in council, etc. I am not right on the technicalities, and I make no apologies for that, either; I am moving too quickly these days. I will say that I prefer the bill to come in individually.

At the same time I will say to the members of the government that we did support the minister in her efforts to get things started. We still prefer individual bills for each board and in fact that may be what will happen once the commission that is looking at the work, trying to get input from the minister—I believe that still might be a possibility. I believe I am right in saying that the government has said it is going to provide a sunset amendment for the two boards we are mentioning, which means no more established by regulation. I am not assuming; I read it. Am I correct on that, Mr Chairman?

**The Vice-Chair:** I believe there is an amendment proposed.

**Mrs Cunningham:** We had a draft from the minister. But having said those things, you seem to feel rather strongly about a bill such as you have yourself and further amendments. I am wondering if you could just say that in another way or help me with what I think you said because of my difficulties here.

**Mr Ferrand:** I hope I understood the question clearly. I certainly will try to stay within what is acceptable here.

We are not against Bill 109; we think it is a good bill, the basic is there. There are needs to make major changes to the bill which would simplify life for all, including Catholic section and public section. The concept of a three-head school board is a difficult one to operate, because the middle head, being the conseil plénier, has authority only on maintenance of buildings. The two sections are fully autonomous as far as education is concerned, but for some reason nobody wants to recognize that we are a true school board in that sense. People have difficulty with that; they want to deal with the conseil plénier as if that was the conseil scolaire de langue française, the school board. That obviously adds to a problem related to financing, because there is a cost attached to this.

Having said that, we are supportive of other school boards being created but not at the cost and trouble that our school board has lived through and will continue to live through until the government helps us settle our problems or our difficulties.

**Mrs Cunningham:** Do you have a suggestion on the financing?

**Mr Ferrand:** We have a suggestion and hope we will be invited by the Minister of Education to present our suggestion.

**The Vice-Chair:** I want to take this opportunity to remind members that we do have a few minutes left. I have three more speakers on the list. I will proceed on your advice to extend the time, but I remind you that we do have to come back and deal with clause-by-clause consideration.

**Mrs Cunningham:** Do you have my colleague on the list?

**The Vice-Chair:** I have Mr Wilson, Mr Beer and Mr Martin, in that order. You will bow to Mr Wilson?

**Mrs Cunningham:** Yes.

**Mr J. Wilson:** I think, too, that the financial issues are important and I would ask that you certainly not make any apologies to this committee for bringing them up. I understand where the minister is coming from on that, but I think it is important, and it is the point I brought up yesterday, that prior to the establishment of new French-language boards, particularly in Simcoe county, where ratepayers are very much worried about increased taxes that may or may not come as a result—we do not know at this point what the government's commitment to financing of new boards will be; we have not heard from the minister. Frankly, I appreciate your comments, because I am disappointed. In tough economic times—in any economic times—it is an integral part of the discussion, and it would be foolish for this government to ignore those realities. So I appreciate that. We are told in answers to these questions by other witnesses and by the minister that there are different models set up. Well, that is wonderful phraseology, but it does not answer my questions.

Second, we are told that the advisory board will look into these things. In the meantime, we also have the minister moving ahead with a commitment to enter into discussions to create two new boards. So we find it all very confusing. I also appreciate your comments on the fact that this is all very rushed. I think we need to take a step back and review this. Sorry, that is more of a comment than a question.

1710

**The Vice-Chair:** If it is a comment, I will proceed to Mr Beer—perhaps he can ask a very quick question—and then on to Mr Martin.

**Mr Beer:** Either that or a very quick comment. I think one of the important things you have done today, and others have commented on it, is that it is difficult to move to create school boards. Having sat on the committee that brought into being Bill 109, or at least looked at Bill 109 and then brought that forward, I think we recognized then, as you mentioned before in numerous discussions I had with you over a period of time on some of the problems that emerged, some of which perhaps were foreseen, some which perhaps we hoped against hope would not emerge, but none the less there are some problems.

I think what this underlines is the importance of the work of FLAG as it goes about really identifying the factors that would go into the creation of boards, understanding that neither moving by regulation nor moving by an act will necessarily ensure that there are no problems, but that as we move on and create other boards I suspect we would learn from that and have fewer problems.

I think the other issue, and you underlined this as well, was looking at regionally constituted boards, so as we look at Prescott-Russell, as we look at Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, as we look at Sudbury, Nipissing, Algoma, when we are looking at those areas in terms of French-language governance we can do different kinds of things. Indeed, there must be at least 10 to 15 francophone groups

in the province that have brought forward, for different areas of the province, different approaches in terms of how to structure a school board.

But all of those being put forward and all having to be dealt with, I would still say, in the context of the two bills we are looking at, that I believe that we can go forward with those, as has been mentioned, with the sunset provision that would apply to the regulation. Really what that does is allow us to move forward with respect to the two areas that are on the table, not without consultation and discussion; but then, out of the work of the French-language advisory group, having a kind of model approach we would then take in future to the creation of new French-language boards—or, for that matter, English-language boards, because, again, I think it is awfully important to recognize the reciprocity of the rights we are discussing here. They apply to both English- and French-language minorities, as they do to public and separate minority groups within that.

**The Vice-Chair:** Would you like to quickly comment on that?

**Mr Ferrand:** A very quick one. I think you are absolutely right. When we look at the whole situation in Prescott-Russell and Ottawa-Carleton, we certainly do not forget the anglophones from Prescott-Russell or the situation they will be in should the bill go through and a French school board be created. They would not be different from us; we would be in the same situation. We are trying to make all of you benefit from the experience we have and hope we will spare the anglophones in this case. That is the point I wanted to make.

**Mr Martin:** It is nice to see you come today on such short notice. I just want to say that what you started with the minister today re your financial situation is not something new to her; she already knew that. My interaction with her over the last few months certainly speaks to my seeing a person who is very much concerned about the situation you find yourself in. You are not the only one in the province who is in that situation. Combine that with a situation where the ministry is in jeopardy of being taken to court over issues and being forced to do things that maybe it would rather not do but would rather do after some consultation with folks, which makes more sense, because then you have some leeway to move. As you said, the setup in Ottawa right now for you is not the best one. Perhaps there is another one, and we need to talk about that; but for us to be forced to do something about that by either a financial crisis or a court case does not to me make any sense in this day and age. I would suggest to you that that is the reason we move so quickly now so that we can get on with that. As each day goes by, I am sure your problem gets worse. Right?

**Mr Ferrand:** Yes.

**Mr Martin:** Okay. That is the situation we find ourselves in, and we assure you of consultation down the road. It might not be as long as you have been used to, because the government has taken for ever to respond to your needs as francophone people in Ontario. We will do this quickly, and it will be done with respect to your needs



and the needs of others whom you will impact in the communities.

The question I have for you after having said all that and out of that is: Your experience of doing two sections under the one umbrella is that it does not work. Is that right?

**Mr Ferrand:** I am not saying it does not work. It is very difficult to administer, considering that you are fully autonomous for education. But when it comes to putting your efforts together and sitting at the conseil plénier, which is the meeting of all the board members—there are 14 on the Catholic, only eight from the public; 14 from one side and eight from the other—democracy is very difficult to apply. If you were to put your work, efforts or demands together, it would be a single majority vote and you would have to live with that. You could not even recuperate if things went bad, so this is one major difficulty we have.

We think the concept could work and it would be much more easily applicable if it were all within people sharing the same philosophy. That is why we promote this regional school board. We have been doing some talking with boards around us, namely, Prescott and Russell, Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry and a couple of others. They are very receptive, but where and when can we be heard on that thing considering that other boards are not very interested? It will probably not deprive Prescott and Russell from getting its board on a Catholic side, and maybe the Catholic from Prescott would associate with the Catholic from Ottawa-Carleton. The marriage here would be Catholic from one region with Catholic from another region versus public and public, instead of public and Catholic, which is not easily administered.

**Mr Martin:** It is my understanding that that in fact could possibly happen.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** It is my understanding that those are the possibilities that are under negotiation with the situation now. No report has come to me, certainly, about the progress of those negotiations. They are going on in the community.

**Mr Martin:** It is happening out there now.

**Mr Ferrand:** For the financial part, the third head being the conseil plénier, the main link, if you want, most of us do not really understand the necessity for this. If you are talking about cost reduction and so on, we have our own director of education and so do they. What is the need to have a general director? What does he really do? You need that to take care of building maintenance, and that is a superstructure that is very, very expensive.

**Mr J. Wilson:** That point was made yesterday.

**The Vice-Chair:** There being no further questions or comments, I would—

**Mr J. Wilson:** I do have a further question.

**The Vice-Chair:** Just in the nick of time. Okay, one very brief comment or question.

**Mr J. Wilson:** How much time do we have left for this?

**The Vice-Chair:** We are over the time. We do have to go through clause-by-clause and in addition we are taking a 15-minute break to allow for caucusing. I am at your direction.

**Mr J. Wilson:** You are going into a 15-minute break now?

**The Vice-Chair:** Yes, before we come back.

**Mr J. Wilson:** That is fine. I may ask something privately, then.

**The Vice-Chair:** In that case, I thank you for coming before us today and taking the time. We surely appreciate it. To members of the committee, I point out that the clerk is giving each of us a copy of the amendments put forward by the government, and I would ask that we all return promptly within 15 minutes, which on my watch would put us at 25 minutes to six, so that we could carry on with clause-by-clause consideration of the bills before us. Do we have that agreement? There is also likely to be a vote in the House, so I would ask that we all get back and deal with what we can and then reconvene after the vote in the House, I suppose.

The committee recessed at 1721.

1739

**The Vice-Chair:** In the interests of time, we will begin clause-by-clause reading of the bill. Shall we proceed, members of the committee? We will consider Bill 12, An Act to amend the Education Act.

Section 1 agreed to.

Section 2:

**The Vice-Chair:** Mr Martin moves that section 2 of the bill be amended by adding the following subsection to section 10 of the act:

“(11d) Subsections (11a), (11b) and (11c) are repealed on 1 January 1994.”

**Mrs Cunningham:** We tabled another amendment. May I ask a question on the last amendment before you call the vote?

**The Vice-Chair:** Yes.

**Mrs Cunningham:** I know during the discussions and the questions and answers, and I believe also when the minister spoke about this amendment, I think in her comments in the House, that her intention with this sunset motion was that basically this bill will be dealing with just two school boards. I am just wondering if that is the case, if that is the intention. I just wonder if we could have it reiterated or clarified.

**The Vice-Chair:** I am sorry, I lost you a little bit.

**Mrs Cunningham:** I want a clarification by the minister, just an opportunity for her to talk about the intent of this amendment, which we appreciate, by the way.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** At the present time the French Language Education Governance Advisory Group has been formed, is meeting and has been asked to report by 15 May. At that point consultation would go on among us all and with the communities on the recommendations of that committee prior to the bringing in of legislation that would then be, in our view, an umbrella piece of legislation

that would give the kinds of criteria that you all have been asking for in terms of the foundation of new boards.

At the present time our indications are that only two school boards in the province have indicated that they would likely be ready to go ahead with the formation of a French-language school board before that process is complete. Those two boards are Simcoe and Prescott-Russell.

The reason we did not put either of those boards in the act or name them—and it is really important that you understand this—is that neither of them are at the point where they actually are ready and we do not want to in any way pre-empt the discussions that are going on by saying we assume they are going to form, because we do not necessarily assume they are going to be ready to form. That is why we do not want them mentioned. We simply are saying that in that hiatus period before we have the umbrella legislation, we want the power to do that if that is necessary. But we did not want to sound as though we were taking the initiative to form the school boards, because that is not what we are trying to do.

**Mrs Cunningham:** Could I ask a couple of subsequent questions so that I can understand, because I want to be able to explain it as well?

If in fact the advisory committee comes back and makes a recommendation that either two or one or maybe no boards can be supported at this time because we have not come far enough along in the negotiations, would that be one of the possibilities? I know it is not the expectation, but it could be.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Certainly. If in fact it becomes clear in terms of the negotiation that the protection of the minority-language sections or the protection of existing school boards is in doubt, then the provisions under Bill 30 and the provisions under which we have looked at the formation of school boards would come into play, of course.

Our concern is that we never split out the school boards in such a way as to make it impossible for them to be viable, as to the kind of suggestion the Ottawa-Carleton people were doing, looking at alternatives around regional things and so on, the negotiating teams are clearly instructed that this is to be part of the consideration they do.

On the other hand, it has to be really clear that self-determination is at the base of the Mahé decision, and so if in spite of all the best advice that is given and so on a group of parents that has a right to do so says it wants governance over its minority-language area, we get back into the legal difficulty if we do not do it. Then the onus is on us, as a ministry, to ensure that the minority language rights and the other language rights are protected in that area.

**Mrs Cunningham:** Would it be a possibility then that you may in fact come back with an act pertaining to an individual board since the circumstances and the arrangements could be very different? I cannot imagine, with all of the combinations and permutations of arrangements around finances, building use or numbers of trustees, that you could ever make a global piece of legislation that would meet everyone's needs. Would one of the options

you would be looking at in fact be an individual bill? Is that possible?

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** I would not preclude that. That might be a possibility, but I would say, and I think it is really important for us all to be clear, that every time we create another school board by a separate bill, it means that every time we want to do anything minor to the Education Act we have to make amendments to all those other bills. I think our effort would be to try to find ways in which we all can be comfortable about setting the conditions and the situation and still fulfil our legislative duty, simply because, as you know, the Education Act has been amended and amended and amended. If you have to do that on 15 different bills, say, every time, it does become difficult, but if that is what we need to do—

**Mrs Cunningham:** I appreciate the frankness here today.

**Mr Beer:** Just on this point, and then to go back, I want to add that it seems to me the previous government, when we were looking at how to go forward, one of the things was, as I mentioned in my remarks the other day, looking at some sort of model bill. I think the minister's comments are appropriate in that I suspect we might be able to come up with a model bill around parts that would be common no matter what you were doing, but where the kind of particular situations—as you say, there could be many—would have to be dealt with in a certain way. I think the work of the advisory group could lead to that.

The second point that I would just like to make—I keep reiterating this but I think it is a terribly important that we never forget it—is that in terms of the Mahé court decision, while it dealt specifically with the issue of French-language governance, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms speaks to both.

One could see in Prescott-Russell, for example, whether it is the English-speaking Catholic minority group in that instance, those protections are similar for it and it is very important we remember that. I think that as the governance group goes forward, when we are looking at how we then put that together, we could have in this province a movement by an English-speaking minority group around governance, going to court or doing whatever, before a French-language group might be ready.

What is going on here is really and primarily the protection of minority language rights, be they French or English, in whatever part of the province.

1750

**Mrs Cunningham:** My last question, and this might bore everybody but I need to be refreshed, is that the date January 1994 pertains directly to trying to get there so that school boards can have their elections. Why 1994? Does this cover two elections or one?

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** One.

**Mrs Cunningham:** The next election being?

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** In 1991.

**Mrs Cunningham:** So it does cover two elections.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** No, 1991 only.



**Mrs Cunningham:** I do not understand why it does not finish on 1 January 1992. That is what I do not understand.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** It is to cover between the election periods. It is to make sure that in between that time, if there is a negotiated issue—remember the section here that is saying that if everybody is ready and there is a negotiated settlement and so on, between elections a school board can be formed. It has to be in that period between the elections.

**Mrs McLeod:** Can I just ask the same question again because I think I share the same concern? The 1991 date would obviously deal with the immediate situation. After that date, presumably you will have the recommendations of the French Language Education Governance Advisory Committee and will bring forward a different set of recommendations as to the establishment of any future boards. I guess the question is, why would there need to be that extensive period of time?

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** We would certainly hope that it would be done, but we also feel as a government that we need the leeway if in fact during the consultation process we find that there is enough delay and enough difficulty in coming to a consensus around the umbrella legislation, that we would not find ourselves forced into court again. It is the same issue.

We want to take our time with this model legislation. If it takes us enough time and a group should come forward and demand this before we have come to all those conclusions, our real concern is that we not get ourselves forced into a situation where the courts dictate to us and limit our choices around this model legislation. That is a real concern. I think it was the concern of the previous government as well, that when courts make decisions they limit the possibility of tailoring the thing to the particular circumstances of our province.

**Mrs McLeod:** If I may just say, I think that probably accentuates the concern we have about how long it might take to have new legislation in place to govern this as opposed to looking for potential extensions of the dates that are presented today.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** It certainly is not our intention to have it go any longer, but I do feel that as a government we would be foolish not to allow ourselves enough time.

One of the suggestions I had made was that we say "repealed on or before 1 January," when legislation is ready or "1 January 1994," whichever is first. I am certainly happy to do that. I do not have a problem one way or the other because our intention is certainly to have it ready before that time. There have been many delays along the way on this issue, which is clearly a highly emotional and difficult one for a lot of communities.

I think we would all be foolish to make an assumption that by January 1992 we would necessarily have all this in place. I would really argue very strongly that the committee not limit us all in that very tight timetable.

**Mrs Cunningham:** Maybe you could add "or before." That would help a little bit.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Sure. I have no problem with that.

**Mrs Cunningham:** You know how technical some communities can be.

**Mr J. Wilson:** I would certainly agree that we do not want to be limited to too tight a time frame in this particular instance. I do have a question, though, about the advisory board. Given the sensitivities in local communities and given the parameters of the Supreme Court's decision, who does the advisory board consult with? Does it go back to ratepayers? I can understand the sensitivities and not wanting to bring out the whole issue again, or the emotional side of that issue, but there will be a real concern in, again, Simcoe county if the advisory board is not reaching out to all groups.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** My understanding is that the advisory board has already set up a timetable for widespread consultation that will have open public hearings in a number of cities around the province. I do not have the schedule with me now, but I know that is the intention. All the stakeholder groups have been informed of the creation of the committee and the membership of it and those plans. I think we have covered our bases with the groups.

I do not know and I cannot remember, frankly, from the terms of reference that we set out, whether there had to be public advertising of those meetings. That I cannot tell you. I think there did, but I cannot tell you for sure.

**Mr Owens:** If I can just make a quick point of order here, Gary's interpreters are only available until 6:30. We are trying to make some kind of arrangement to have people come in. We are obviously going to carry on past that hour. We have some telephone numbers, if there is some way Lynn or somebody can contact them. We cannot leave.

**Mrs Cunningham:** Do you need my approval?

**The Chair:** Perhaps if we just move along, we can be completed by 6:30.

**Mr Owens:** I just bring that up.

**The Chair:** Given the amendments that are—

**Mrs Cunningham:** Is it 6:30 you are talking about?

**The Chair:** We are not noticing the clock as we have passed 6 o'clock. There has been agreement that we will continue until we adjourn formally at 6, depending on wherever the clock happens to be at that moment.

**Mr Owens:** It is just that Gary's interpreters are finished at 6:30 and we do not have any available.

**Mrs Cunningham:** We hope to be done by then.

**The Chair:** If we can cut short the debate and the comments, we may be able to be.

**Mrs Cunningham:** It saves meeting after the break, though, does it not?

**Mr Owens:** Absolutely.

**The Chair:** Shall we proceed? Any further comment on this amendment?

In that case, I am advised that if we put the question on this amendment, there is one that precedes it. There is a Progressive Conservative motion that goes before this one. Can we set this aside and deal with that first or shall we deal with this?

**Mrs Cunningham:** However you want to deal with it. We may as well deal with it. I do not think they affect each other.

**The Chair:** This is a government amendment.

**Mr Beecroft:** If I could comment on the wording, it is not enough to simply say that the subsections are repealed on or before 1 January 1994. You can say, which I think gets the meaning you want, "subsection (11a), (11b) and (11c) are repealed on 1 January 1994 or on such earlier date as may be named by proclamation of the Lieutenant Governor in Council." Does that capture the intention?

**The Chair:** Is everyone satisfied with that wording which has just been read into the record by legislative counsel? We will deem that this government motion has been amended to read that.

Motion agreed to.

**The Chair:** We will move back now to the PC motions.

Mrs Cunningham moves that section 2 of the bill be amended by adding the following clause 2(11b)(g) as follows, and that the succeeding clauses be relettered appropriately:

"(g) the process by which any board or employee group which may be affected directly or indirectly by the creation of a French-language school board is consulted prior to the creation of the new board."

**Mr Martin:** It is my sense of what is unfolding re this whole process that this in fact is what FLAG is already doing and that there will be ample opportunity for all of those groups to make their presentations to FLAG, and that even after FLAG has returned to suggest a process, it will actually be done again in each specific situation.

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** I think the issue here, though, is that before FLAG reports, the import of this is to make sure that this consultation happens for any board that is created through the regulation, and we certainly can agree to that.

**Mrs Cunningham:** That was the only intent.

1800

**Mr Beecroft:** I just want to understand the purpose of this amendment. If you look at page 1 of the bill, subsection 11a is the key provision. That is the provision that gives the Lieutenant Governor in Council power to make regulations. Subsection 11b lists things that can be included in that regulation. I think what you are trying to get at—

**Mrs Cunningham:** I am sorry. I missed your last point.

**Mr Beecroft:** Subsection 11b is a list of items that can be included in a regulation under subsection 11a. Do I understand your intention to be that before making a regulation under 11a, the LG in C can make regulations requiring consultation before the regulation under 11a is made, or is that to be part of the regulation under 11a?

**Mrs Cunningham:** It is a process, so help us along here. Where would you put it?

**Mr Hope:** Would it not be in addition to it?

**Mrs Cunningham:** I understand what you are saying.

**Mr Beecroft:** I can imagine your amendment working exactly as it is written, but it looks a little awkward to me. What it would do, it seems to me, is that you would have a regulation establishing the such-and-such French-language school board for a certain area, and then as part of that regulation you would say that before anything else happens, there has to be consultation. Then, I guess, presumably an amending regulation is made to spell out other information about that board.

The alternative would be to say, in a completely separate subsection 11e—

**Mrs Cunningham:** Perhaps 11d?

**Mr Beecroft:** We have just passed 11d. Subsection 11d would have to cover this new subsection as well, but it would be subsection 11e to say, "The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations respecting the process by which any board or employee group which may be affected directly or indirectly by the creation of a French-language school board is consulted prior to the making of a regulation under subsection 11a."

**Mrs Cunningham:** That is fine, or if you want to put it before the last one because it makes more sense, we could just change the numbers on the last one.

**Mr Beecroft:** Yes.

**Mrs Cunningham:** It is great to have legislative counsel around some days.

Interjections.

**The Chair:** That is about as good as it is going to get, legislative counsel. He better take that Hansard home and frame it.

**Mr Hope:** I just want to get something clear here. You are talking about inserting this clause g where? Clause g is on the PC paper here. I just want to know where you are putting that.

**Mr Beecroft:** I would suggest that it appear as subsection 11d and then Mr Martin's motion be renumbered so that subsection becomes subsection 11e, and also covers subsection 11d so that subsection 11d is also repealed.

**Mrs McLeod:** Can I just ask legislative counsel to repeat the wording that he would propose for this new subsection?

**Mr Beecroft:** I think it would be, "I move that section 10 of the act, as set out in section 2 of the bill, be amended by adding the following subsection:

"(11d) The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations respecting the process by which a board or employee group which may be affected directly or indirectly by the creation of a French-language school board is consulted prior to the making of a regulation under subsection 11a."

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** I do not think that does it. I think what we want on that subsection 11d is that subsection 11a can apply only if a process of consultation has taken place with any board or employee group which may be affected directly or indirectly by the creation of a French-language school board. I think that is what you mean. I think that is what the speakers have been asking for.



**Mr Owens:** So what we would do then is just renumber the new clause and renumber or reletter—

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** Sure, subsection 11a only applies if that process has been gone through.

**The Chair:** Could I suggest, since obviously it is the desire of the committee to include that with the intent that the minister has just stated—clearly I see a consensus—if we could direct legislative counsel to bring that forward before the end of the proceeding today, we can then see it in the right place and in the meantime proceed with the other sections. Is that acceptable to the committee? We will proceed. That is it for section 2.

Sections 3 and 4 agreed to.

Section 5:

**The Chair:** There is a Progressive Conservative motion on section 5.

Mrs Cunningham moves that section 5 of the bill, amending section 136g of the act, as enacted by the Statutes of Ontario, 1986, chapter 21, section 2, be amended by deleting the proposed section 4 and the following substituted therefor:

“(4) Despite subsections 1 to 3, for the first school year in which an election is effective and for every subsequent year, the entitlement of a Roman Catholic school board under section 136e applies in respect of all secondary school grades if, in the first school year, the board provides instruction in all secondary school grades and the instruction is provided in a school operated by another board by means of an agreement with the other board mentioned in the board’s first annual implementation plan.”

**Mrs Cunningham:** That is very technical, but it would solve some of the problems that we heard presented to this committee and certainly one of our major concerns in the bill.

**The Chair:** Any discussion on this amendment, minister?

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** I do not think that there are any problems. I am not sure that it has the effect that—

**The Chair:** Okay, legislative counsel is going to do it again.

**Mrs Cunningham:** It is good that he is a divergent thinker.

**Mr Beecroft:** As I understand it, you are adding the last line to the existing provision. It is again just a language problem. There are two boards referred to in this subsection, so your last line mentioning “in the board’s first annual implementation plan” raises the question of which board you are talking about. I think the same objective could be reached by taking the existing provision and adding after the word “provided” in the sixth line, “if, in the first school year, the board provides instruction in all secondary school grades and the instruction is provided in accordance with the board’s first annual implementation plan in a school operated by another board.” If you do it that way, then there is no ambiguity about which board you are talking about when you are talking about the implementation plan.

**The Chair:** Could we agree to ask legislative counsel to redraft?

**Mrs Cunningham:** First annual implementation plan?

**Mr Beecroft:** There is terminology in the act for that.

**Mrs Cunningham:** Yes, I thought so too. I cannot find it.

**Mr Beecroft:** First annual implementation plan.

**Mrs Cunningham:** That is right. That is why I was doing it.

**The Chair:** Are you going to accept the change in wording in your amendment to section 5?

**Mrs Cunningham:** Yes.

Motion agreed to.

Section 5, as amended, agreed to.

**Mr Beer:** I would just wish a merry Christmas to legislative counsel.

Sections 6 to 13, inclusive, agreed to.

## 1810

Section 14:

**The Chair:** We have some amendments to section 14.

Mr Martin moves that rule 6 of subsection 206a(6) of the act, as set out in subsection 14(2) of the bill, be struck out and the following substituted:

“6. If a board approves an increase or decrease of either one or two in the number of members of the board by resolution passed by three quarters of the members of the board before the date mentioned in rule 7, the number of members of the board shall be deemed to be increased or decreased in accordance with the resolution for the next regular election.

“7. Rule 6 applies if the resolution is passed before the 31st day of March in the year of the regular election or if the determination of the calculated enrolment and the total calculated enrolment of the board is referred to the Languages of Instruction Commission of Ontario under subsection 277q(4), before the 30th day of April in the year of the regular election.”

**Mr Beer:** Could you just explain the change there?

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** This is essentially to meet the concerns that the Ontario Public School Boards’ Association brought forward around timing and to give the additional time that they required, or they thought that public school boards would require, prior to elections. Since we had changed them in accordance with an earlier request, we have no problem with turning them back.

Motion agreed to.

**The Chair:** Mr Martin moves that subsection 206a(16) of the act, as set out in subsection 14(5) of the bill, be struck out and the following substituted:

“(16) A resolution under subsection 13 has no effect unless it is passed before the 31st day of March in the year of the next regular election or, if the determination of the calculated enrolment and the total calculated enrolment of the board is referred to the Languages of Instruction Commission of Ontario under subsection 277q(4), before the 30th day of April in the year of the next regular election.”

**Hon Mrs Boyd:** The same explanation.

Motion agreed to.

Section 14, as amended, agreed to.

Sections 15 to 18, inclusive, agreed to.

Section 19:

**The Chair:** Mr Martin moves that subsection 277q(5) of the act, as set out in section 19 of the bill, be struck out and the following substituted:

"(5) The Languages of Instruction Commission of Ontario shall determine the calculated enrolment and the total calculated enrolment of the board and shall notify the appropriate supervisory officer of its determination not later than 20 days after the referral under subsection 4."

Motion agreed to.

Section 19, as amended, agreed to.

Sections 20 to 24, inclusive, agreed to.

Title agreed to.

**The Chair:** We have a couple now that we have to go back to. Have we got that ready, legislative counsel, on subsection 2?

**Mr Beecroft:** I think this covers it.

**The Chair:** Mr Martin moves that section 10 of the act, as set out in section 2 of the bill, be amended by adding the following subsection:

"(11d) A regulation may not be made under subsection 11a unless there has been consultation with boards and employee groups that will be affected directly or indirectly by the creation of a French-language school board under the regulation."

Motion agreed to.

Section 2, as amended, agreed to.

Bill, as amended, ordered to be reported.

**Mr J. Wilson:** When will this bill be reported to the House or tabled? It is tonight?

**The Chair:** As soon as we do Bill 13. They will be reported as soon as they are both completed.

Next is Bill 13, An Act to amend the Ottawa-Carleton French-Language School Board Act, 1988

Sections 1 to 4, inclusive, agreed to.

Les articles 1 à 4, inclusivement, sont adoptés.

Title agreed to.

Le titre est adopté.

Bill ordered to be reported.

Le projet de loi devra faire l'objet d'un rapport.

**The Chair:** We will be reporting the bills shortly, immediately following the adjournment of the committee.

I would like to thank all the members of the committee, the deputations that have appeared before us and legislative counsel. I hope this is an example of how we can work together over the months ahead and I look forward to continuing our important work together.

**Mr Owens:** I would like to echo your sentiments on behalf of the government side. It has been a real pleasure to work with the other two parties.

**Mr Beer:** Sometimes it may be more interesting.

The committee adjourned at 1818.



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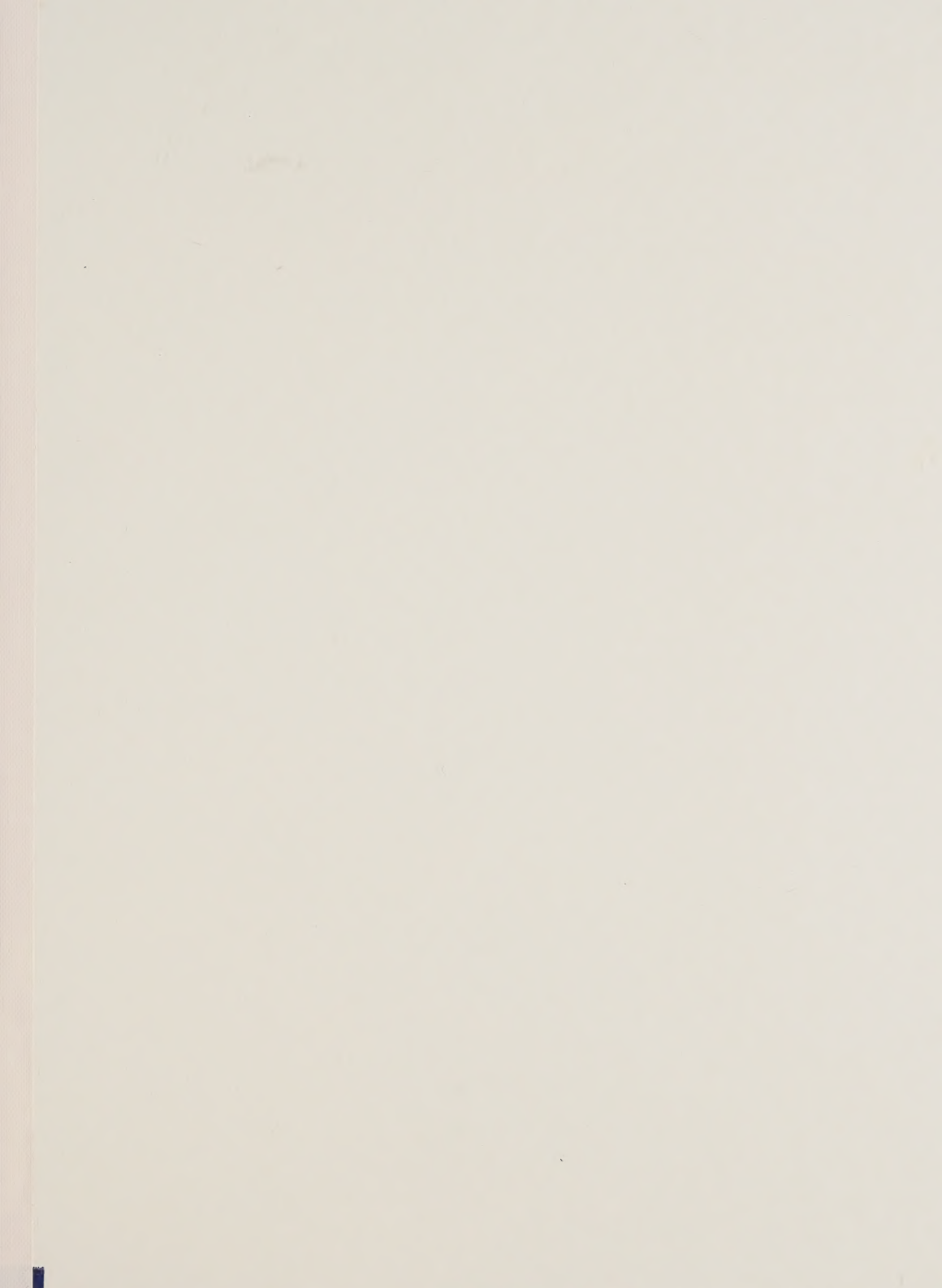












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